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ABSTRACT

THE VALIDITY OF THE GROWING DISCIPLES IN
COMMUNITY MODEL AMONG ADOLESCENTS
IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOLS
IN NORTH AMERICA

by

Kathleen Beagles

Chair: Jimmy Kijai

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: THE VALIDITY OF THE GROWING DISCIPLES IN COMMUNITY MODEL
AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOLS IN
NORTH AMERICA

Name of researcher: Kathleen Beagles

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Date completed: December 2009

Purpose of the Study

There is little empirical research about discipleship, and particularly discipleship and adolescents. An understanding of Christian discipleship might, however, be an antidote for a growing trend toward consumer mentality in the church, the effect of post-Christian culture on the home, and the departure of the younger generations from active church life, which are all seen as problems that face Western Christianity. The purpose of this study was to examine the validity of a discipleship model—Growing Disciples in Community.

Method

A conceptual model of discipleship and discipling based on theology and social science theory is developed and tested for its validity. Using Amos 7, the theoretical model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) with a large dataset of some 11,000 cases of adolescents attending private schools operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. The primary objective was to determine whether the theoretical covariance matrix is consistent with the empirical covariance matrix.

Results

1. The theoretical covariance matrix and the empirical covariance matrix were found to be consistent, which indicates that there is empirical support for the Growing Disciples in Community model.
2. There were found to be significant relationships (correlations) among the variables of the model.
3. The validity of the model was also found to be stable across demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, grade levels, and even at-risk behaviors.

Conclusion

The Growing Disciples in Community model includes concepts of *connecting*, *understanding*, and *ministering*, which are considered processes of personal discipleship. The model indicates that the discipling attitudes and behaviors of family, friends, Christian teachers, and the local congregation (*equipping*) help explain adolescents' responses to the indicators of personal discipleship.

Intergenerational connectedness with other Christians has a strong impact on adolescents' connecting with God and others, understanding and appreciating God's relationship with humanity, and ministering to and serving others around them. Intentional efforts within the local church to develop and strengthen healthy and appropriate intergenerational relationships will support and benefit the discipleship of all members, not only adolescents.

Andrews University

School of Education

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COMMUNITY MODEL AMONG ADOLESCENTS
IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOLS
IN NORTH AMERICA

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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December 2009

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Dedicated to
three wonderful women
who “came alongside” me during this journey—
Pat Habada—a true mother in Israel
who chose, affirmed, and supported me like a daughter;
Jane Thayer—a friend and sister-in-the-Lord
who inspired and mentored me as a discipler and religious educator;
and
Yerusi Fajardo—a “daughter” and assistant
who caught the vision, managed details, and found amazing resources;
And also dedicated to
the most inspiring man in my life—my son JEB.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

A look at the scholarly dialogue and the nonformal publications of those involved with church ministries in the Evangelical Protestant tradition in North America reveals what I see as three convergent problematic themes: (a) a society divorced from Christian values, which greatly impacts the home (Nelson, 2008), (b) a belief among church members that one can be a Christian without being a disciple (Hull, 2006), and (c) the problem of young people in their 20s¹ leaving active church life as soon as they can (Black, 2008; Dudley, 1983, 2000; Martin, 2008/2009).

Of course, different authors refer to these problematic themes with different language. The first theme was forecast “only a generation ago, [when] two Christian prophets, Francis Schaeffer and Elton Trueblood, predicted that we were one generation away from losing the memory of Christianity in our culture. They both referred to America as a ‘cut-flower’ society” by which they meant that “our culture has been severed from its Judeo-Christian roots and we are living on the memory of faith” (Ogden, 2003, p. 34).

¹ Referred to as “emerging adults” (McNamara Barry & Nelson, 2005).

The second problematic theme in the literature of the Christian church is sometimes called a consumer mentality (Hull, 2006) and a bar-code Christianity (Willard, 1998); the Christians in the pews are referred to as passive recipients, spectators, or reviewers (Ogden, 2003).

The third problematic theme I see plaguing today's Christian church is the loss of its youth. Dudley and Dudley (1986) related their findings regarding the religious value statements of youth to both emancipation theory and social learning theory when they reported that youth become less traditional in religious values than their parents, but also that they tend to "vary *with* their parents on the traditional to non-traditional continuum" [emphasis mine] of religious values (p. 13). Nelson (2006) discusses the effect of culture on family and family on children when he explains the children's inability to develop an "image of God" in their homes of origin. It is at this convergence of the three problematic themes that I see a great need for a different approach to discipling within the 21st-century Christian church.

At the same time that these three problematic themes are discernable in the literature, other currently popular themes seem to touch on a solution to the problems listed above. These are themes of discipleship, discipling (disciple-making), and spiritual formation. There are differing views about what these terms actually mean, to whom they apply, and how they currently do and potentially could impact the convergent themes of missing Christian values in society, "Christians" unengaged in discipleship, and youth flight from the church. However, there seems to be general consensus that passionate discipleship and spiritual transformation

are all-too-often missing elements in the life of the Christian church today. Ogden (2003) states that the church is suffering from a “disciple deficit” and further states that “disciple making, discipleship, and discipling are hot topics today, because we see such a great need for this focus in our churches” (p. 18).

It seems imperative that both the concerns and potential solutions be looked at together and a model be proposed of how discipleship and discipling could work together within the church body to create a family environment such as that outlined in Deut 6:4-9 (the Shema), in which adults were instructed to engage in the everyday activities of life (sit, walk, lie down, and rise up) with the less mature. The intent being that everyone in the church body would “in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Eph 4:15, NIV). This discipleship model would involve and fully engage everyone, particularly the young people, all of whom must struggle to follow Christ in the midst of a secular culture.

The focus of much of the literature on spiritual formation and discipleship seems to acknowledge a need for the contemporary Christian church (see Hunneshagen, 2002) to address

the central problem . . . of how to routinely lead its members through a path of spiritual, moral, and personal transformation that brings them into authentic Christlikeness in every aspect of their lives, enabling them . . . ‘to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [they] have been called’ (Eph 4:1, NASV). (Willard, 2008, p. 9)

“Our job description as Christ’s people, is to bring disciples to the point of obedience to ‘all things whatsoever I have commanded you’” (Willard, 2000, p. 255). Evangelical Christian churches, however, often function as if they believe that an initial spreading of the gospel and call to church membership is a fulfilling of the

Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). But those who are brought into the church through evangelism or through birth seem to, in many cases, become “consumers of religious goods and services” (Hull, 2006, p. 41) rather than disciples who are learning “to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:20, NASB), including loving one another and bearing much fruit. Ogden (2003) states that “our zeal to go wider has not been matched by a commitment to go deeper” (p. 22). Nelson (2008) describes the “patterns of influence” in our society and how they have affected the cultural “ethos.” It can no longer be assumed that those coming into a church fellowship are coming from a highly Christian-influenced culture. According to Oman and Thoresen (2003), Americans “unconsciously—but nevertheless observationally”—learned patterns of spiritual behavior vicariously before the 1960s, and this guided them through at least the early stages of their spiritual search (p. 156).

It is different today. Ogden (2003) states that

to the extent that the church is reduced to an aggregate of individuals who shop like consumers to meet their needs, we do not have the basis for community in any biblical sense. How can we possibly build countercultural communities out of such porous material? (p. 31)

J. D. Jones (2006) calls the church to “rediscover an understanding of itself as a disciple-forming community” (p. 2). Nelson (2008) explains that “it was by participation in congregations that believers were to acquire the mind of Christ . . . to ‘grow up . . . into Christ’ . . . and to relate to Christ in such a way they could “teach and admonish one another in all wisdom” (p. 83).

The problems facing the body of Christ manifest themselves in many ways among adult members, but among the youth they seem to manifest themselves most

prominently by the youth walking away from the church. One commentator on this phenomenon says that “the young person may discern that the significant adults in his or her life are much more ready to proclaim certain values than they are to live by them” (Dudley, 1983). Another prolific writer on religious education states that “it is because so many parents and teachers profess to believe the Word of God while their lives deny its power” (White, 1903, p. 259) that the youth walk away from the church (or, as quaintly put at the turn of the century, “the infidelity of the youth”). “Adolescents ‘want to find something in religion, but many of them fail to do so. Their reactions to failure often take the form of intolerance, cynicism, and withdrawal from church activities’” (Cole & Hall, as cited in Dudley, 1983, pp. 56, 57).

The problem of the loss of our late adolescents is decried, studied, and creatively considered by many but is, as yet, not solved.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has historically seen its extensive church school system as a bulwark against this exodus of young people, but what Nelson calls today’s “cultural ethos” continues to erode its effects. And, it will never be possible for everyone to attend the church school system. What can the church do to foster true discipleship among adults and to keep its young people attached to the church community for spiritual growth as well?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has various organized church ministries that endeavor to nurture the spiritual, mental, and even physical growth of members, primarily through various non-formal means. The leaders of these ministries, however, have tended to see their work as originators and promoters of

ministry programs rather than as individual parts of coordinated discipling and religious education. Ogden (2003) lists discipling through programs as the second of his enumerated causes “of the low estate of discipleship” (p. 42).

So, how is discipleship among Christian believers facilitated other than by programs? Various models have been proposed to help explain how discipleship and discipling work and what the life transformation and resultant spirituality are like.

A three-stage model was proposed in the discipleship classic, *The Training of the Twelve* (Bruce, 1963), originally printed in 1871. Bruce sets forth three stages—believers in Christ, fellowship with Christ, and chosen to be trained by Christ (pp. 11, 12). Hull (2006) adds a fourth stage to Bruce’s three in order to “show how the disciples finished their training and moved on to carry out their mission” (p. 169). He calls the stages “Come and see,” “Come and follow me,” “Come and be with me,” and “Remain in me” (p. 170).

Closely related to the concept of discipleship is the concept of being transformed into Christ’s image—the result of choosing, following, and remaining in Him. Hull (2006, p. 130) suggests a six-fold definition of the transformation of disciples. Boa (2001) explains the process of growing Christian spirituality, the desired result of true discipleship, as a “gem with many facets.” His model includes 12 facets, providing an approach for every personality type.

Rick Warren’s Life Development Process, which, according to Ogden (2003, p. 53), is one of the “most popular and copied public discipleship models,” involves “covenant membership” (making a commitment to Christ), “the covenant of

maturity” (committing to “basic spiritual disciplines of growth”), “the covenant of ministry,” which involves using one’s experience and gifts for others, and “commitment to missions,” which involves compassionate service. This model is portrayed in the form of a baseball diamond, with everything centering around the pitcher’s mound in the middle, which is “magnification or worship.”

This model implies that after a commitment to become a “disciple” of Christ, one also commits to a life of spiritual growth through disciplines, a life of relational service and compassionate ministry using one’s gifts and abilities in the context of corporate worship.

Over the past few years, the ministries directors at the highest level of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, the General Conference, have been spearheading an initiative that has been named *Growing Disciples*. One aspect of this initiative has been to create a curriculum framework by which the educational endeavors of the various ministries can be coordinated to more effectively impact the nurture and spiritual growth of church members. In this effort the General Conference has been joined by members of the Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Department of the School of Education at Andrews University and by the faculty of the Religious Education Program at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the campus of Andrews University. This curriculum framework could be the basis of coordinating ministry efforts and materials. At the present time, the complete conceptual model upon which to base the framework is still under discussion.

In this study, the four basic elements of the Growing Disciples model—connecting, understanding, equipping, and ministering—are being used to create an articulation of the model, which is called Growing Disciples in Community.

Conceptual Framework

Any Christian in the lives of adolescents fills the role of a discipler or religious educator. The problem is that these key Christians—parents, friends, teachers, and local church congregation—are often not themselves growing toward “the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ” (Eph 4:13, NASB). And many are far from fulfilling the multiple commands in the New Testament about how church members are to care for and support one another (see Appendix A). The “consumer religion” many practice is perceived, especially by adolescents, as empty, ineffectual, and hypocritical. Because of these failures, adolescents are not exposed to what a vibrant Christian walk as a disciple of Jesus looks and feels like or how to have one of their own.

The Growing Disciples in Community model being tested in this study involves four processes in which each and all persons who have committed their lives to following Jesus Christ should be involved. These processes, while described one by one, are not linear or sequential. Each disciple, no matter the level of maturity, should be growing spirally in each of the processes simultaneously. The fourth process, however, involves individuals growing in discipleship, but it is acted out in community (see Figure 1).

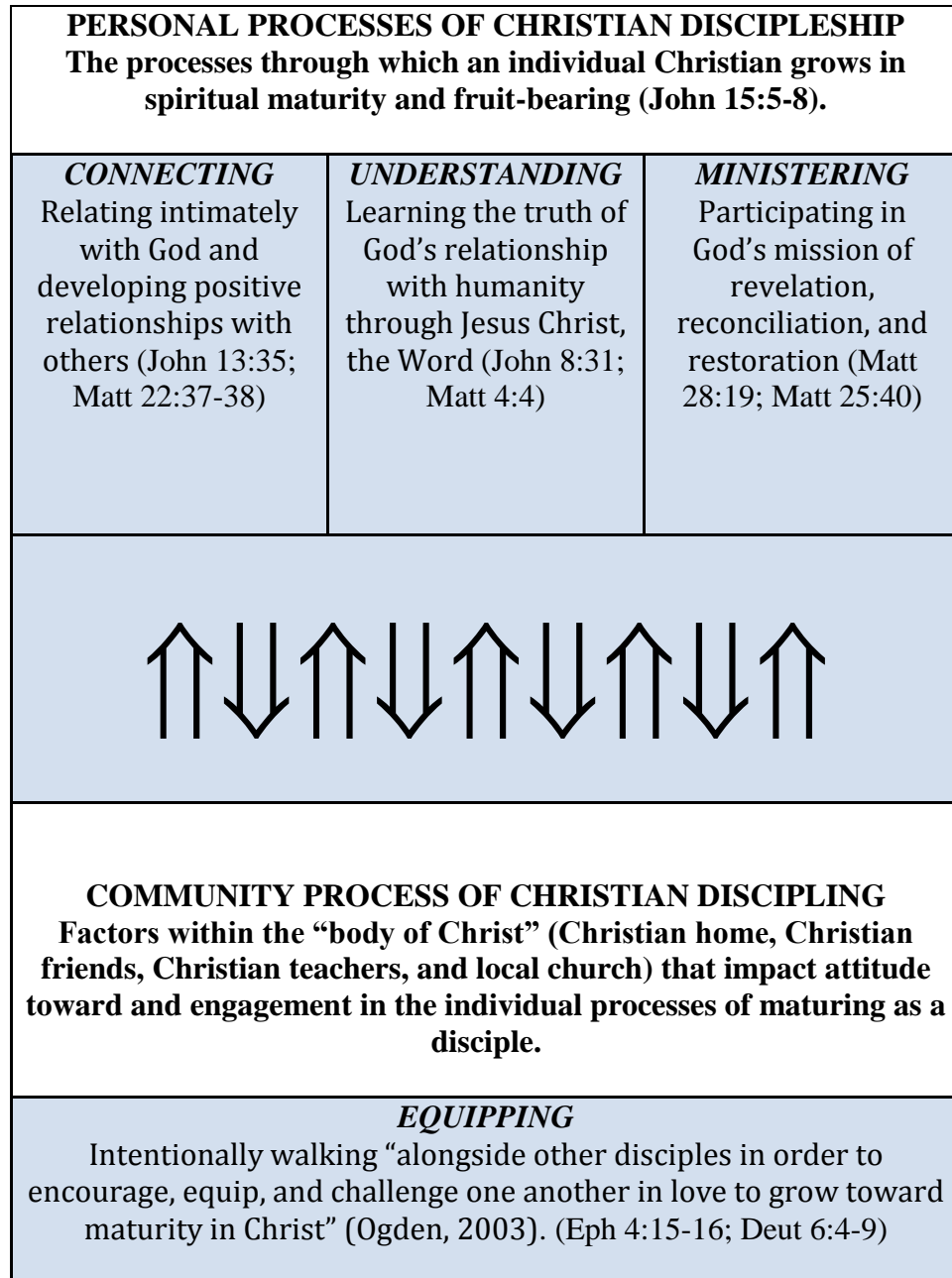


Figure 1. Growing Disciples in Community conceptual framework.

One process (*connecting*: relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others) is relational and was articulated by Jesus in the Gospels in ways such as, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35, NASB), and, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt 22:37-39, NASB). This process involves the way we relate to ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our fellow believers, our communities, and any “neighbor” to whom we are called to relate in the entire world.

Another process (*understanding*: learning the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word) is cognitive and involves the intellect. It was articulated by Jesus thus: “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine’ (John 8:31, NASB), and, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (Matt 4:4, NASB).

Another process (*ministering*: participating in God’s mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration) relates to service and evangelism. Jesus expressed it this way: “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least *of them*, you did it to Me’” (Matt 25:40, NASB), and, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20, NASB).

The community process (*equipping*: intentionally walking “alongside other disciples, in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” [Ogden, 2003, p. 129]) also involves all individual disciples, but in this study is being looked at primarily as a corporate process. It is relational just as the connecting process referred to above, but equipping is meant to raise the connecting process to the level of a corporate mandate. It is not always clearly evident as a separate process in the literature on discipleship, because Jesus summed it up as a relational process in John 13:35 (“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”). It was actually the apostle Paul who more fully articulated this process and how it was to play out in the life of the Christian church:

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:15-16, NIV)

According to the Growing Disciples in Community model, the individual processes will be fully functioning in the lives of the individual members of the Christian body to the extent that the corporate process is functioning, and vice versa. It can be a chicken-and-egg phenomenon. However, in the case of adolescents, the corporate process will affect the individual processes of the adolescent more than the individual processes of the adolescent will affect the corporate process of the body. The positive influence of encouraging, equipping, and challenging one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ should flow most strongly from the body to the individual adolescent disciple, helping the young person grow in his or her relationships, understanding, and ministry.

There are certainly ways that various segments of the Christian church attempt to live the fourth process—equipping. Aspects of it can be seen in the various ministries of the church, including the pastoral ministry, children’s ministry, youth ministry, and educational ministry. But the concept of equipping is easily lost in the usual functions referred to as “ministries.” Ministry implies one level of “disciple” filling some need of another level of “disciple” or even of “non-disciples.” It tends to be hierarchical instead of reciprocal. It tends to be programmatic rather than relational.

Aspects of the church’s attempt to live in the process of equipping can be seen in religious education, whether it be formal (church-related schools), non-formal (at church and camps, etc.), or through socialization (home and society). However, education implies the cognitive over the relational—information over the sharing of personal faith and story (see Deut 6:4-9). Relational stories of personal faith are most often left unsaid but are lived out. What religious educators in the formal, nonformal, and social settings may not take into consideration is that a form of equipping (discipling) also happens through, or is sabotaged by, the “hidden curriculum” of the lives and attitudes of believers that often contradicts the planned curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

There are many models for personal discipleship and spiritual growth, as well as for mentoring and discipling others. But these models are seldom empirically tested. There appears to be little if any empirical data regarding how discipling attitudes and behaviors affect the discipleship processes of adolescents.

Purpose of the Study

This study tested the validity of the discipleship model, Growing Disciples in Community, which involves personal processes of discipleship as well as the corporate process of discipling others.

Research Questions

1. Is the theoretical covariance matrix in the Growing Disciples in Community structural model (see Figure 2) consistent with the empirical covariance matrix?
2. What are the relationships between the corporate process of *equipping* (in the family, with friends, with Christian teachers, and in the local church) and each of the personal discipleship processes (connecting, understanding, and ministering) of adolescents?
3. Is the model stable across gender, age, ethnicity, and at-risk conditions?

Significance of the Study

As noted earlier, it seems to me that the church's concerns about both problematic themes of (a) a society divorced from Christian values and (b) a belief among church members that one can be a Christian without being a disciple, have a decidedly negative impact on (c) the problem of young people in their 20s leaving active church life as soon as they can.

If it can be shown that the "discipling" behaviors of Christian families, Christian friends, teachers at Christian schools, and adults in local congregations positively affect the personal discipleship processes of adolescents, it will help to validate a model of discipleship that can impact the way that the church does

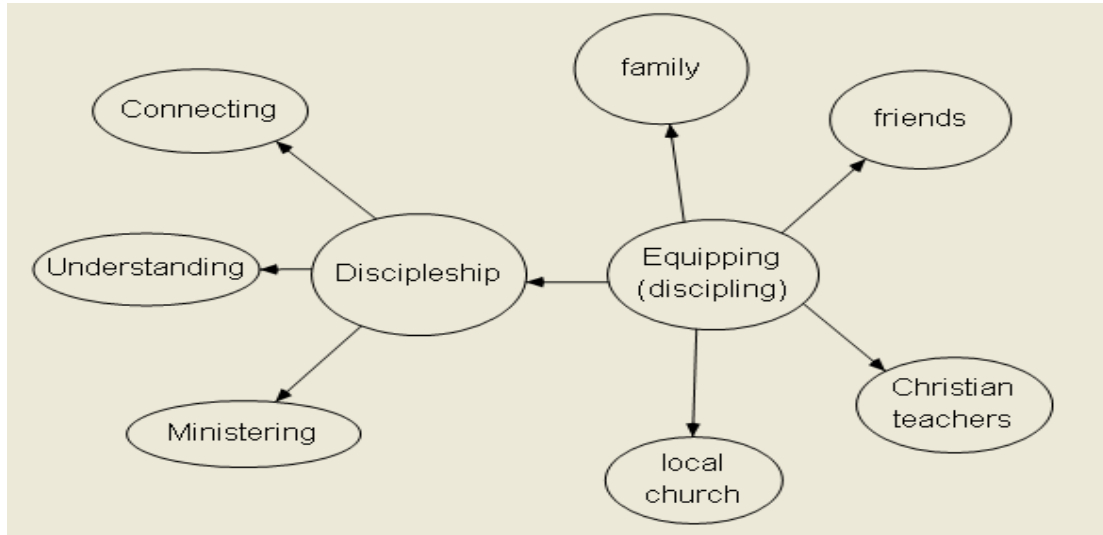


Figure 2. Growing Disciples in Community hypothesized structural model (before confirmatory factor analysis).

religious education for discipling. It can establish a paradigm by which ministries of the church can be coordinated and evaluated for their actual effect on the problem

of how to routinely lead its members through a path of spiritual, moral, and personal transformation that brings them into authentic Christlikeness in every aspect of their lives, enabling them . . . 'to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [they] have been called' (Eph 4:1, NASV). (Willard, 2008, p. 9)

The results of this limited study of the Growing Disciples in Community model could help inform the larger Growing Disciples initiative.

Definition of Terms

Adolescent: Approximately ages 12 to 18.

Adventist: A member of or pertaining to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Connecting: Relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others. I have operationalized this process as having a strong

sense of a positive relationship with God, fostering that relationship through prayer and devotional activities, and extending that positive relationship to others.

Discipleship: Following the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, daily as He shapes one's life in community and sends one to disciple another.

Discipling: Intentionally walking "alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ" (Ogden, 2003, p. 129).

Equipping: "By its very nature [equipping] is not just teaching skills but holistically growing people up in Christ's way of living and loving so that the whole body ends up increasing in maturity in him" (Gorman, 2002, p. 17). The Shema (Deut 6) gives the subject matter and the methodology. I operationalized this process in this study as talking openly with adolescents and sharing one's religious faith, as well as creating a warm yet thought-provoking environment in which adolescents can develop their own faith.

Hidden curriculum: (also called unplanned or unintended learning) can be defined as "some of the outcomes or by-products of schools or of non-school settings, particularly those states which are learned but not openly intended" (Martin, 1983, p. 124). I operationalized "hidden curriculum" for this study as the attitudes and actions of family, friends, teachers, and local church members that are not part of the planned formal or informal religious education at home, school, or church.

Ministering: Participating in God's mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration, which involves evangelism and witness, as well as service for no other

reason but to relieve the suffering of humanity. I operationalize this process as involvement with humanitarian activities and sharing one's experience, strength, and hope.

North American Division: The region of the Seventh-day Adventist Church made up primarily of the United States and Canada.

Religiosity: "The practice of being religious (e.g., attending religious services, praying, ascribing value to one's religious beliefs)" (Gunnore & Moore, 2002, p. 613).

Religious education: "Teaching them to obey all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19) within the context of relationships in the home, school, and church. This is a part of discipling.

Seventh-day Adventist school system: A world-wide private school system run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which includes kindergarten through university. It is reportedly the second largest private school system in the United States (Gillespie, Donahue, Boyatt, & Gane, 2004).

Spirituality: "Benner (1989) described spirituality as a deep and mysterious human yearning for self-transcendence and surrender, a yearning to find meaning and a place in the world" (Bruce & Cockreham, 2004, p. 334). "An individual's personal belief in religious teachings or intrinsic commitment to one's faith" (Good & Willoughby, 2006, p. 41).

Spiritual formation: Gerald G. May writes that "spiritual formation is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instructions, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth. It includes

educational endeavors as well as the more intimate and in-depth process of spiritual direction” (as quoted in Willard, 2000, p. 254).

For the purpose of this study, spiritual formation is conceptually defined in the words of Willard and Johnson (2006): “Spiritual formation for the Christian refers to the Spirit-driven *process of forming the inner world of the human self so that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself*. . . . Obedience is an essential outcome of Christian spiritual formation (see John 13:34-35; 14:21)” (p. 15).

Understanding: Learning the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word. “Formation by the Spirit of God in Christ . . . comes initially and mainly through immersion in and constant application (John 8:31; 15:7) of the *word* of Christ, his gospel and his commands that are inseparable from his person and his presence” (Willard, 2000, p. 256). I operationalize this process as a deepening belief in the fundamentals of who God is, who humanity is, and how God relates with humanity personally and corporately to redeem them and recreate a perfect world for them.

Valuegenesis²: A study done in 2000 of Seventh-day Adventist adolescents, initially including some 16,020 participants who returned completed surveys.

Limitations

1. The Valuegenesis² study is limited to adolescents who completed the survey in schools operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and who were in Grades 6 through 12 in the North American Division school system. The sample is therefore biased toward students from families who are committed to some degree to private formal religious education.

2. The findings of this study are reflective of the unique characteristics of students attending Adventist schools.

3. The items and scales used in this study were limited to items on the Valuegenesis² study, which was developed to measure faith maturity (among other things) and not to test a model of discipleship.

Delimitations

This study is limited to data sets within the overall data collected in the Valuegenesis² study that I have chosen to reflect my operational definitions of the processes in the discipleship model being tested. It is also limited to complete data sets with no missing responses in order to make the best use of structural equation modeling software.

Outline of the Chapters

This study is structured in the following manner: Chapter 1 outlines the background of the problem, the conceptual framework, the statement of the problem and research questions, and the purpose and the significance of the study, as well as a definition of terms used and the limitations and delimitations of the data.

Chapter 2 reviews precedent literature on discipleship and the specific processes of the discipleship model being tested in this study.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in the study, including research design, population, statistical procedures, and information about the sample used. It also includes a description of the variables used and the scales that were created.

Chapter 4 responds to the research questions and discusses what correlations support or reject the discipleship model being tested.

Chapter 5 is a summary of the study, discussion, and implications for how the discipleship model being tested might be used to guide religious education in the context of Christian families, Christian friends, Christian teachers, and local congregations. Further areas of research are also suggested.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Christian Discipleship

General Overview

In the Christian world the word *discipleship* is discussed by many, but fully comprehended by few. By discipleship some people mean primarily a response to Jesus' call to "Come, follow Me" (Matt 19:21, NASB) or an invitation to a personal relationship with Him. For others it connotes the commission to "Go . . . make disciples" (Matt 28:19, NASB), bringing others to a similar belief in Jesus as they themselves have.

Still other Christians understand that, at a minimum, both following Christ and making other disciples are involved in the concept of discipleship, but they are not sure how either of those activities impacts their lives or even what the Christian life would look like if discipleship were practiced on a daily basis.

One author, attempting to take a biblical view of discipleship, poses three questions: "What is discipleship? How is discipleship accomplished? What is involved in prompting discipleship?" (Samra, 2003, p. 219). Samra believes there are three reasons for the confusion over what discipleship is. The first reason he cites is that sometimes the Greek word *disciple* in the New Testament is used in a strictly intellectual sense, thus making discipleship "simply the process of being

educated by a teacher,” and at other times it “seems to involve life transformation . . . in which case discipleship is seen as the process of becoming like one’s master” (p. 219).

The second reason he gives for the confusion over the term discipleship is that

at times the focus is on the beginning of the process (Matt 27:57; Acts 14:21), in which case discipleship is *becoming* a disciple. At other times (and more frequently) the focus is on *being* a disciple (Luke 14:26-27), in which case discipleship is the process of becoming like one’s master. (p. 219)

The third reason Samra gives for confusion is that there are “different referents” for the term disciple. Sometimes the term refers to the masses who occasionally followed Jesus in order to learn about Him. Other times the term is used for the specific few selected to become “as much like Christ as possible through concentrated, focused life transference” (p. 220).

Samra (2003) cuts through the confusion and concludes that the term discipleship refers to both becoming and being—both evangelism and growth. “Therefore it is best to think of discipleship as the process of becoming like Christ” (p. 220). “It encompasses both the entry into the process (salvation) and growth in the process (sanctification)” (p. 234).

“All Christians are disciples and are called to participate in the discipleship process, both by receiving instruction and living out their faith for others to see and imitate” (p. 234).

The ideas in Samra’s simple definition and explanation of discipleship echo in Collinson’s (2004) meticulously crafted definition of discipling in the theological

monograph *Making Disciples: The Significance of Jesus' Educational Methods for Today's Church*.

Christian discipling is an intentional, largely informal learning activity. It involves two or a small group of individuals, who typically function within a larger nurturing community and hold to the same beliefs. Each makes a voluntary commitment to the other/s to form close personal relationships for an extended period of time, in order that those who at a particular time are perceived as having superior knowledge and/or skills will attempt to cause learning to take place in the lives of others who seek their help. Christian discipling is intended to result in each becoming an active follower of Jesus and a participant in his mission to the world. (p. 164)

Collinson (2004) gives the aim of discipling as “the attainment of maturity and development of the ability to become a teacher or discipler of others” (p. 160). Combining ideas of both Samra (2003) and Collinson (2004), discipleship and discipling seem to be inextricably linked in aim and process. “All Christians are disciples and are called to participate in the discipleship process, both by receiving instruction and living out their faith for others to see and imitate” (Samra, 2003, p. 234), including intentionally discipling others for the purpose or aim of their “attainment of maturity” and their “development of the ability to become a teacher or discipler of others” (Collinson, 2004, p. 160), in part by simply “living out their faith for others to see and imitate” (Samra, 2003, p. 234).

Samra's (2003) questions, “What is discipleship?” and “How is discipleship accomplished?” seem to be answered in the combined explanations of discipleship and discipling already discussed. Both discipleship and discipling involve participating in the processes of receiving instruction from God and others and living out one's faith for others to see and imitate for the purpose of their spiritual maturity and their ability to disciple still others.

However, his third question—“What is involved in prompting discipleship?”—is a more complicated question to answer. Many dedicated disciplers and religious educators have offered theories, models, and personal praxis to attempt to answer that question.

Models of Discipleship

Since the mid-20th century in the United States, there have been “three streams of thought regarding discipleship” (Hull, 2006, p. 18). Hull sees the rise of organizations such as The Navigators and Campus Crusade for Christ as the first of these streams. He calls this stream “Classic Discipleship.” The characteristics of this approach to discipleship included mentoring, disciplined Bible study and memorization, and training in witnessing—personally and publically. The strengths of the approach included focus, method, and measured performance. “The essential and lasting strength of classic discipleship is its commitment to Scripture and the importance of sequence and segmentation in training people well” (p. 18). However, the weaknesses included a lack of addressing the disciple’s inner life and the tendency of the discipleship to last only as long as a program did.

The second stream of thought regarding discipleship that Hull (2006) reports is the spiritual formation movement. This movement recaptures “ancient exercises practiced by Jesus, his disciples, and the monastics” (p. 18). Many of these “ancient exercises” were not embraced by the participants in the Protestant Reformation when they made their break from their Catholic heritage. Hull states,

By definition spiritual formation is a process through which individuals who have received new life take on the character of Jesus Christ by a combination of effort and grace. The disciple positions himself to follow Jesus. The actual

process of reforming, or spiritual formation, involves both God's grace and the individual's effort. (p. 19)

Hull (2006) believes that "the weakness of the spiritual formation movement—at least from an evangelical point of view" (p. 19) is that it is easily infiltrated by secular worldviews and other religions and philosophies. It is important to distinguish Christian spiritual formation from others. Hull believes that the greatest strength of this stream of discipleship is that it "causes us to slow down twenty-first-century life long enough to ponder what's going on in us and around us" (p. 19). But, he also believes that "recently the spiritual formation movement has also incorporated the focused and 'let's get things done' nature of the classic discipleship movement, creating a richer and more thoughtful approach to transformation" (p. 19).

The third stream of thought Hull calls "environmental discipleship"; however, it is also called "psychological discipleship" or "relational discipleship." Crabb (1999), Wilhoit (2008) and Gorman (2002) write about community or sometimes family. J. D. Jones (2006) and Nelson (2008) speak of congregation, "encompassing the ways people get along" (Hull, 2006, p. 20).

Hull sees this third stream as addressing "one of the least-developed concepts in discipleship" (p. 20). That concept is "how the environment of a group determines what grows or dies within that environment" (p. 20). He considers this "least-developed concept" as important in discussing discipleship because "the most important issues in spiritual transformation are the presence of acceptance, integrity of relationships, and trust" (p. 20).

Looking at all three streams of discipleship, Hull sees the classic discipleship movement as having mandated trust: “You must be accountable to me” (p. 20). He sees the spiritual formation movement as having required submission: “If you want to be a part of our society, you must subject yourself fully to it. No negotiations” (p.20). But, he believes that

the therapeutic society we live in has developed its own environment, which accepts nearly anything, no matter how damaging it might be. . . . Fortunately, some thoughtful Christians have “spoiled” the therapeutic world, introducing some very important insights that create trust and allow disciples to flourish. (p. 20)

Some of the “very important insights” (among many others) that are in varying ways connected to the “therapeutic world” can be found in the work of Cloud and Townsend (2001), Crabb (1997), Holmes (2006), and Holmes and Williams (2007a, 2007b).

Hull (2006) believes that “these three movements—classic discipleship, spiritual formation, and environmental discipleship—are now converging to create a new, full-bodied discipleship, with the potential to transform the church in the next twenty-five years” (p. 20).

Hertig (2001) sees the great commission recorded in Matt 28:18-20 as a “post-resurrection declaration of God’s universal reign” (p. 343). He points out that “make disciples (*matheteusate*) is the main verb, and thus the focal point of Jesus’ mission. ‘Going,’ ‘baptizing,’ and ‘teaching’ are parallel participles subordinate to ‘make disciples’” (p. 346). Hertig continues,

The resurrection of Jesus led to the final mission mandate which involved more than proclaiming, but also demanded the surrender to Jesus’ Lordship through the making of disciples. . . . Disciples are urged both to understand Jesus’ words

and to apply them without compromise (Matt 7:24-27). . . . Disciple making is not a performance; it is total submission to God's reign. (p. 347)

Hertig (2001) claims that what prompts discipleship is a sense of holistic mission (to bodies and souls in social contexts)—“the central expression of the Christian faith” (p. 347). Jacob (2002) would say, “Christian mission is the response of Christians to the presence of God, and their participation in God's action to liberate all people” (p. 102). The explanation considered previously—that both discipleship and discipling seem to be participating in the processes of receiving instruction from God and others and living out one's faith for others to see and imitate for the purpose of their spiritual maturity and their ability to disciple still others—is a strong corollary to Jacob's “Christian mission,” if not the very same thing.

Yet another model to help answer the question, “What is involved in prompting discipleship?” follows a family model. Petersen (1993), in *Lifestyle Discipleship: The Challenge of Following Jesus in Today's World*, describes spiritual parenting. This model attends to the spiritual development of the newer or younger Christian, adapting the role of the discipler to meet the changing needs of the one being disciplined. In 1 Thess 2:7-10, the disciple is described as a little child and the discipler as being “gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children” (NASB). The needs that the “child” has are for protection and love; meeting those needs is what will “prompt discipleship” in the new/young disciple.

Paul also implies an “adolescent” stage disciple. The discipleship-prompting that this group needs is that of a father “exhorting and encouraging and imploring” (1 Thes 2:11, NASB). The discipler must take on a slightly different role with a

disciple in a different stage of discipleship. Petersen (1993) says that “the objective of the ‘father’ is to equip the child or youth to live a life worthy of God, to live as a citizen of His Kingdom ought to live” (p. 59).

As the disciples grow and mature, they become brothers and sisters (see 1 Thess 1:6-10 and 2:13-16), peers, standing “shoulder to shoulder.” The goal, of course, is maturity in Christ, and it can happen only over time. Different stages of discipling initiative require different parenting roles to be taken by the discipler.

There are still other models that a discipler can use in “prompting” discipleship in others and that inform what methods can be used. A three-stage model was proposed in the discipleship classic, *The Training of the Twelve* (Bruce, 1963), originally printed in 1871. Bruce sets forth three stages—believers in Christ, fellowship with Christ, and chosen to be trained by Christ (pp. 11, 12). Hull adds a fourth stage to Bruce’s three in order to “show how the disciples finished their training and moved on to carry out their mission” (Hull, 2006, p. 169). He calls Bruce’s first stage, “Come and see,” Bruce’s second stage, “Come and follow me,” and Bruce’s third stage, “Come and be with me.” The fourth stage that Hull adds he calls, “Remain in me” (p. 170).

Closely related to the concept of discipleship is the concept of being transformed into Christ’s image—the result of choosing, following, and remaining in Him. Hull (2006) suggests a six-fold definition of the transformation of disciples (p. 130). Boa (2001) explains the process of growing Christian spirituality, the desired result of true discipleship, as a “gem with many facets.” His model includes 12 facets, providing an approach for every personality type. According to Harrington (2007),

“Christian spirituality is discipleship, that is, a positive response to the call of Jesus despite or even because of our personal unworthiness” (p. 38).

Rick Warren’s Life Development Process, which, according to Ogden (2003, p. 53), is one of the “most popular and copied public discipleship models,” involves “covenant membership” (making a commitment to Christ), “the covenant of maturity” (committing to “basic spiritual disciplines of growth”), “the covenant of ministry,” which involves using one’s experience and gifts for others, and “commitment to missions,” which involves compassionate service. This model is portrayed in the form of a baseball diamond, with everything centering around the pitcher’s mound in the middle, which is “magnification or worship.” Warren’s model implies that after a commitment to become a “disciple” of Christ, one also commits to a life of spiritual growth through disciplines—a life of relational service and compassionate ministry using one’s gifts and abilities in the context of corporate worship.

The questions are, Are these commitments adequate for prompting discipleship? and How are the commitments prompted?

Discipleship Models and Adolescents

Particularly designed for adolescent catechesis, Henning’s (2007) tripod construct grows out of “question six of the ‘Baltimore Catechism’ [which] explains that God made us to know, love and serve him ‘in this world, and to be happy with him forever’ in the next” (p. 56). Henning suggests a framework for adolescent discipleship that has three legs—to know, to love, and to serve God. This three-legged stool formation supplies a stable foundation when the legs are balanced. The

seat that rests on these legs is life experience. These legs, of course, are known to educators as the cognitive construct (to know God), the affective construct (to love God), and the behavioral construct (to serve God). Henning observes that “those who work with young people have become aware of the importance of methodology in discipleship formation” (p. 57). She points out that looking at the ultimate discipler and model—Jesus Christ—makes it obvious “that it is not just what we teach but how we teach it and live it that is of supreme importance” (p. 57). The message is definitely impacted by the messenger. And, for young people, observing in the lives of their disciplers the lived experience of being a disciple is crucial for them to be able to internalize the head and heart knowledge they are taught. “For young people, truth is verified by experience” (p. 57). The personal, spiritual experience of the discipler of young people is definitely “hidden curriculum” in the discipling methodology, especially if it is not congruent with the cognitive and affective aspects of the curriculum (see Martin, 1983).

Prompting discipleship in children and youth is also addressed by Hunneshagen (2002) as he approaches confirmation ministry—or what he calls the “discipleship training of children and youth” (p. 192). Based heavily on developmental theory and research, his model, or basic framework, includes “4 turnings, 6 disciplines, and 19 assets” (p. 190). Hunneshagen sees “the congregation as a whole as the primary instructor” (p. 191). The first avenue it uses for this disciple-making task “is *Kerygma*—the church’s proclamation and sharing of the Good News with undisciplined people” (p. 191). The second avenue used “is *Koinonia*—the Christ-infused fellowship in which loving, caring, forgiving

relationships are built and nurtured” (p. 191). The third avenue “is *Diakonia*—the body of Christ serving people and the world at their point of need” (p. 191).

The actual discipleship being prompted involves four “turnings”—a concept Hunneshagen (2002) takes from the mission and purpose statement of his Lutheran congregation. The “turnings” are “1) turning to Christ; 2) turning to the Christian message and ethic; 3) turning to a Christian congregation; and 4) turning to the world in love and mission.” He states that “mature discipleship does not emerge until all four ‘turnings’ have occurred” (pp. 191, 192). The local congregation particularly is the agent that “prompts” this maturing discipleship. The turnings can occur in any order, but he emphasizes the importance of these turnings beginning to happen in childhood and youth.

The six disciplines are the actions Hunneshagen has chosen as the ones that a committed Christian disciple will undertake. They are (a) worship, (b) prayer, (c) Bible study, (d) giving, (e) service, and (f) witness (p. 192).

Search Institute’s “40 Developmental Assets” (Roehlkepartain, 1998) is the source from which Hunneshagen’s congregation chose 19 assets that they felt they had the capacity to address. The 40 assets are based on research that has identified 40 positive experiences and qualities that children and teenagers need, such as “‘External Assets’ of: #3 other adult relationships, #15 positive peer influence, #18 youth programs, and #19 religious community” (p. 192). They chose many more “Internal Assets,” including everything listed under positive relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities (p. 192). Focus on the Family’s *Parenting*

Compass Web site supplies scriptural references to underline the importance of each of the asset (Focus on the Family, 2009).

Gibson (2004) approaches discipling youth from an ecclesiological perspective as well. Although not promoting a model of discipleship, as such, he states that “congregations should foster an environment of discipleship and accountability in which spiritual growth can take place” (p. 10). He maintains that “church programming that separates people by age or social status prevents Christians from hearing the insights of the entire community. The concept of church family somehow gets lost” (p. 9). He recommends “intergenerational connectedness” that promotes “multigenerational worshiping communities wherein young and old, single and married, share and learn together” (p. 9). He claims that “congregational connectivity among teenagers and the entire body of Christ is key to helping adolescents understand the importance of remaining active in the church” (p. 9).

Obviously, models abound that have been created to answer Samra’s (2003) questions—What is discipleship? How is discipleship accomplished? and What is involved in prompting discipleship?

All the models, in one form or another, involve connecting with and growing in relationships with God and with others. A growing connection with God leads one to a deepening understanding of the relationship with Him through the revelation of His Word; the resultant more selfless, growing connection with others as disciples obey God’s command to love others as themselves, results in their ministering to the needs of those others.

All the models that deal with discipling others involve disciples in one way or another equipping others through teaching, nurturing, or example to grow in spiritual maturity as they in turn begin to disciple still others. What follows is the grounding in Scripture and social science on which are based the four main processes of discipleship and discipling that comprise the Growing Disciples in Community model—the model used in this research.

Personal Processes of Discipleship

Connecting With God and Others

Theological Base

The dynamic process of being a disciple of Christ is rooted in connections. Jesus said, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matt 22:37, 38, NASB).

When Jesus says we are to love God with all our hearts, He is quoting from the Shema (Deut 6:4-9), words that observant Jews probably recited several times a day. “But when Jesus goes on to say that we are to love others, he tampers with the sacred creed of his contemporaries. He adds to the *Shema* by quoting Leviticus 19:18, and in so doing creates a new creed for his followers” (McKnight, 2004, p. 23).

If everything depends on these two commandments, then they could be said to be the foundation of everything it means to be a Christian—everything it means to follow and be a disciple of Christ. Being a disciple of Christ depends on the

process of connecting—relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others. Christ has called us to be friends of His (John 15:15).

Implied in “relating intimately with God” is an increasing understanding of and acceptance of oneself. A religious educator at the turn of the century stated that “the work of God needs men and women who have learned of Christ. The moment God's workmen see Him as He is, that moment they will see themselves as they are, and will ask Him to make them what they ought to be” (White, 1993, p. 340).

From a growing connection with God and an honest and growing understanding of themselves, disciples will be able to grow in ability to connect with brother and sister disciples (John 1:12; Rom 8:16). Jesus is quoted in the book of John as saying, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35, NASB). Paul spelled out what that would look like in Rom 12:10: “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor” (NASB). And in Rom 12:16, “Be of the same mind toward one another” (NASB).

“We long for holy friendships that shape and deepen our discipleship in authentic ways, so that we become the people God calls us to be.” L. G. Jones (2006), Dean of the Duke University Divinity School, continues by stating,

My own sense of holy friendships arises out of reflection on the Wesleyan class meetings of the 18th century. These gatherings nurtured community because of their formative and transformative power and because the ways in which they addressed people's yearnings created a significant movement of faithful living. Holy friends are those people who challenge the sins we have come to love—they know us well enough to see the sins that mark our lives. (p. 31)

Crabb (1997) says that “releasing the power of God through our lives into the hearts and souls of others requires that we both *understand* and *enter into* a kind of

relating that only the gospel makes possible, a kind of relating that I call *connecting*" (p. 5).

Hellerman (2009), in *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community*, places the horizontal aspect of connecting—developing positive relationships with others—squarely in the center of what being a growing disciple in community is all about.

Apart from Christ, I have no solid basis on which to build healthy relationships with my fellow human beings. But as a child in God's family I belong to a group where relational integrity and wholeness are to be the norm. Salvation thus has tremendous sociological as well as theological ramifications. (p. 126)

Social Science Base

Correlations have been discovered that promote connection with God and connection with oneself. "Correlational analysis revealed a relationship between identity status and frequency of praying" in adolescents (McKinney & McKinney, 1999, p. 279). Literature on mental health and adolescent religiosity and spirituality shows that higher levels of religiosity and spirituality were associated with better mental health (Wong, Rew, & Slaikeu, 2006), indicating that connection with God and/or others who claim to follow Him resulted in a better integrated sense of self as well.

In 2003 the Commission on Children at Risk released a report to the nation called *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities*. This commission is a "group of 33 children's doctors, research scientists, and mental health and youth service professionals" (p. 5). After investigating "empirically the social, moral, and spiritual foundations of child well-being," the Commission

identified a crisis made up of “deteriorating mental and behavioral health of U.S. children,” and “how we as a society are thinking about this deterioration.” They concluded that “in large measure what’s causing this crisis . . . is a lack of connectedness, . . . close connections to other people, and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning” (p. 5). In their report they concluded that “what can help most to solve the crisis are *authoritative communities*” (p. 6).

“Authoritative community” has become a “new public policy and social science term, developed for the first time” in the commission’s report. The commission’s short definition of the term is “groups that live out the types of connectedness that our children increasingly lack. They are groups of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life” (p. 6).

“The majority of research suggests that the term [spirituality] deals with connections and relations to ourselves, others, and the world around us. It refers to both a sense of interiority or an inner reality and a sense of being connected beyond one’s own self, connected to something ‘greater’” (Watson, as quoted in Bosacki, 2002, p. 56).

Understanding God Through His Word

Theological Base

While all the law and the prophets can be said to depend upon the two great commandments (Matt 22:40)—love to God and to one’s neighbor—a deepening understanding of the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word deepens and enriches discipleship both in its vertical connections (with

God) and horizontal connections (with others). “Disciples are urged both to understand Jesus’ words and to apply them without compromise (Matt 7:24-27)” (Hertig, 2001, p. 347).

Jesus said to those who believed Him, “If you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of Mine” (John 8:31, NASB). Later in the book of John, He is recorded as saying, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him” (John 14:23, NASB). What God has revealed in both the living and the written Word is a vital part of being connected with and following Jesus as His disciple. To Satan, in the wilderness of temptation, Jesus quoted Deut 8:3, saying “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4, NASB).

In the written Word is an explanation of what meditating on and understanding this Word will do for those involved in the processes of Christian discipleship. Paul states to the Corinthians that “all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His *very own* image in ever increasing splendor *and* from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18, AMP).

“Gerhard Barth lists understanding as the essence of being a disciple. *Suniemi* (to understand) occurs frequently in Matthew (e.g. 16:12; 17:13) and is seen as an essential prerequisite for the words of God to be fruitful (13:1-23, 51)” (Collinson, 2005, p. 51).

The Amplified version of 2 Cor 3:18 points out that the dynamic of spiritual formation (being transfigured) is occurring as disciples of Jesus behold Him in His Word. If we accept the concept of spiritual change through “beholding” Christ through His Word, then we should be able to expect increased spirituality with increased understanding of the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word.

A growth in understanding as operationalized in the Growing Disciples in Community model is an integral part of discipleship. Writing about “The Challenge of Being Jesus’ Disciple Today,” in the *African Ecclesial Review*, Alana (2000) states that being a Christian disciple in today’s context “requires each person to spare time each day for *Bible* reading, reflection and praying with the Scriptures which will lead to a life-style based on Christ’s teaching. This is what discipleship is all about: *focusing on Christ and letting His spirit transform our lives*” (p. 114).

Social Science Base

The behavioral sciences do not provide much in the way of empirical studies regarding the effects of understanding as operationalized in this study—learning the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word.

Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Rude (2003) state that,

through the years, many scholars have documented the relative lack of attention to issues of religion and spirituality in the social sciences in general . . . and, more specifically, in the study of adolescence . . . and childhood. Although pioneers in psychology . . . considered religiousness and spirituality to be integral to the field of psychology, the study was marginalized through much of the 20th century. (p. 206)

The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) was conducted from 2001 through 2005, involving both a nationwide random phone survey of parents and teens as well as face-to-face in-depth interviews with selected adolescents. The interviewers “found very few teens from any religious background who are able to articulate well their religious beliefs and explain how those beliefs connect to the rest of their lives” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 262).

In *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*, Willard (1988) states that “as a pastor, teacher, and counselor” he has “repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life” that he attributes to “memorization and meditation upon Scripture” (p. 151). Willard quotes David Watson’s comment during his struggle with cancer:

As I spent time chewing over the endless assurances and promises to be found in the Bible, so my faith in the living God grew stronger and held me safe in his hands. God’s word to us . . . spoken by his Spirit through the Bible, is the very ingredient that feeds our faith. If we feed our souls regularly on God’s word, several times each day, we should become robust spiritually just as we feed on ordinary food several times each day, and become robust physically. Nothing is more important than hearing and obeying the word of God. (pp. 176, 177)

Ministering to Others

Theological Base

Disciples of Christ involve themselves in God’s mission of revelation (Matt 10:24-27; Rom 1:16, 17), reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19), and restoration (Job 33:26; Ps 80:7, 30; Isa 58:8 AMP; Luke 9:11 AMP; Acts 3:21). They obey Christ’s injunction to go, make disciples, and teach them everything He had commanded (Matt 28:18, 20)—how to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and their neighbors as themselves (Matt 22:37, 38). They reveal Christ in their lives and help

reconcile others to a restoring relationship with Him for themselves, actively obeying the second great commandment—to love their neighbors as themselves (Matt 22:37, 38).

According to Hellerman (2009), the Biblical portrayal of reconciliation offers a “hope-giving promise of lasting and meaningful relationships” (p. 138). He adds that “we can define reconciliation as the restoration of a right relationship with Father God and the restoration of right relationships with our fellow human beings who, through conversion to Christ, become our brothers and sisters in faith” (p. 138)

Hertig (2001) says,

If we claim to love our neighbor, then we cannot possibly avoid sharing the good news of salvation with our neighbor, but love of our neighbor does not stop there. Stott clarifies the full scope of mission, pointing out that our neighbor “is neither a bodyless soul” that we should love only our neighbor’s soul, “nor a soulless body that we should care for its welfare alone, nor even a body-soul isolated from society” (1975:29-30). (p. 348)

“The great commission coupled with the implicit great commandment may be summed up as ‘love in action.’ This means that the mission of God must be applicable to the whole person, the whole society, and the whole world” (Hertig, 2001, p. 349). “Christian mission is the response of Christians to the presence of God, and their participation in God’s action to liberate all people” (Jacob, 2002, p. 102).

Hellerman (2009) adds that,

No biblical image of the atonement has greater potential to resonate with our relationally broken culture than the good news that we can be reconciled to God and to our fellow human beings through the death of Jesus on the cross. But the new gospel of reconciliation must take on incarnate form. (p. 138)

Social Science Base

Research on adolescents does not indicate how ministering to or helping others affects their spirituality as much as it focuses the other way around. Research shows that, compared to students not reporting much religious activity, those considered religious were more involved in community service. “Students who believe that religion is important in their lives were almost three times more likely to participate in service than those who do not believe that religion is important” (Furrow, King, & White, 2004, p. 19).

The same researchers add that,

for many, caring values, attitudes, and behaviors were not independent of their spirituality; rather, all aspects of their morality were governed by their religious beliefs and experience, which informed their goals of service and care and which were closely related to their identity. (Furrow et al., 2004, p. 19).

Another way of reporting this effect of religiosity and faith on ministering is to say that “students with strong religious beliefs or faith traditions engaged more readily in community service because they perceived service as the morally right thing to do” (Jones & Hill, 2003, p. 533).

In the National Survey of Youth and Religion, it was found that more self-reportedly religious teens were much more likely to do noncompulsory volunteer work or community service. The “devoted” were more likely to be involved than the “disengaged.” Reportedly the “most religious” were significantly more likely “to engage in the kinds of volunteer and service activities that bring them into contact with racial, economic, and religious differences” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 230).

Although all religiosity is not discipleship, in this study I am equating religiosity with intent to be a disciple of Christ. The self-reported religiosity in the

studies cited was not being used as a perjorative construct as it is in some studies.

Collinson (2005) states about growing discipleship that

the actual learning process itself involves participants going out from the community to be involved in service and mission to the world. It does not focus on personal growth for its own achievement but in looking outward and serving others finds personal growth as a by-product. (p. 241)

The individual processes of discipleship discussed above are connecting with and growing in relationships with God and with others, which leads to a deepening understanding of a relationship with Him through the revelation of His Word, and the resultant more selfless, growing connection with others as we obey God's command to love others as ourselves results in our ministering to their needs. In one way or another, these broad processes umbrella the various models of discipleship already discussed.

Collinson (2005) states that those who respond to God's call to come into a close personal relationship of learning and following Him "begin the lifelong task of knowing him personally, learning his will for their lives as revealed through the Scriptures and serving him through the use of their ministry gifts" (p. 244).

One ministry to which all disciples are called is discipling others. This idea is implicit in most of the discipleship models discussed in this document.

Community Process of Discipling

Equipping One Another

Theological Basis

For the purpose of this discussion of the Growing Disciples in Community model, the process of discipling others is being called Equipping, and being defined

as intentionally walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden, 2003, p. 129). This construct of discipling is reflective of Eph 4:15, 16—

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (NASB)

The construct is also reflective of Deut 6:4-9—

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (NASB)

To “parents and those who work with them in relation to spiritual formation,” Nelson (2006) states the following:

Notice that the Shema is addressed to individuals who belonged to a distinctive community. The characteristics that defined Israel were its understanding of God, its worship, and a way for individuals to live according to laws and teachings from God’s representatives. Although we Christians live in a different era that seems more complex than ancient Israel’s, the situation is about the same. The church, as our community of people with similar beliefs about God, is our Israel. . . . Through adults in the congregation, especially parents, the Christian faith is communicated to children first in their families and later in . . . church-related activities. (p. 15)

The Shema, then, is addressed to adult disciples—not only parents—in a specific religious community who are being commanded to have God in their own hearts and then to sit, walk, lie down, and rise up always in a frame of mind of intentionally walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and

challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden, 2003, p. 129).

“The Shema is both the content and the method of religious education,” states Nelson (2006, p. 17). As operationalized in this paper, religious education is the same as “teaching them to observe all things”—part of the discipling that was commissioned in Matt 28:20.

Discipling

Previously Collinson’s (2004) meticulously crafted definition of discipling was presented in full. In it she describes the intentional relationship, over time, through which one believer passes on knowledge and skill in spiritual matters to another while also receiving the same from someone else (p. 64).

Collinson (2004) gives the aim of discipling as “the attainment of maturity and development of the ability to become a teacher or discipler of others” (p. 160). Of Samra’s (2003) three questions—“What is discipleship? How is discipleship accomplished? and What is involved in prompting discipleship?”—the third one “What is involved in prompting discipleship?” is the one that is directly about discipling—called for the purpose of this model, Equipping.

Hull (2006) points out that Jesus provided on-the-job training (p. 177), starting the “do it” and then “teach it” model (see Matt 10:1-42 and Luke 10:1-24). “In the Gospels becoming like Christ was accomplished by physically going where He went, seeing what He did, hearing what He said” (Samra, 2003, p. 223). In Acts and the Epistles, however, discipleship was not accomplished by time spent in Jesus’ physical presence.

Imitation

In the place of the word *discipleship*, the idea of imitation came to the forefront. It was a concept with which the world was well acquainted. Samra (2003) explains its biblical use as follows:

Several words express this idea: . . . “to use as a model; imitate, emulate, follow,” 2 Thess 3:7-9; Heb 13:7; 3 John 11 . . . “one who imitates someone else; does what that person does,” 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; Heb 6:12 . . . and . . . “one who joins with others in following an example,” Phil 3:17. . . . In other passages (e.g., 1 Cor 7:7-11; Gal 4:12-20; Phil 4:9; James 5:10-11) these terms are not used, but the concept of doing what another did is present. . . . Two important verses combine these ideas: “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord” (1 Thess 1:6), and “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). (pp. 223, 224)

Samra (2003) asserts that imitation is similar to discipleship in that it is a process of lifestyle transference to the next generation. It can happen through learning from those not physically present, like all the examples from Scripture, or it can happen through incarnation, as less mature disciples are discipled by and choose to imitate more mature disciples “who are incarnating Christ’s character” (p. 224). In the words of Collinson (2005), then, “the attainment of maturity is the aim of this lifestyle transference through imitation” (p. 160). And, as Samra (2003) would say, “all Christians are disciples and are called to participate in the discipleship process, both by receiving instruction and living out their faith for others to see and imitate” (p. 234).

Gorman (2002) states that

equipping by its very nature is not just teaching skills but holistically growing people up in Christ’s way of living and loving so that the whole body ends up increasing in maturity in him. . . . Thus kingdom people who are walking in the truth naturally put into practice Spirit-directed skills of supporting, caring for, and building up others in the body relationship. (p. 17)

Collinson (2005) says, "Thus the faith community itself became the vehicles for discipling, under the Lordship of the ascended Christ. . . . And members of the discipling community became both teacher and taught, disciple-maker and disciple" (p. 110).

"Discipleship/imitation seems to take place on a large scale (all the followers of Christ or all believers in a particular church) and at the same time it takes place on a more focused scale with a select few" (Samra, 2003, p. 226). In the Growing Disciples in Community model, equipping, which could also be termed discipling or imitation, takes place by the "select few" of family members and friends, but it also takes place "on a large scale (all the followers of Christ or all believers in a particular church)." And, those being equipped or disciplined imitate those "perceived to be" more mature disciples in the body in whatever way they choose to live "out their faith for others to see and imitate" (Samra, 2003, p. 234).

Social Science Base

Hidden curriculum

The lived out "faith for others to see and imitate" is often a "hidden curriculum" that goes counter to the planned discipling curriculum. It is for this very reason that in the Shema (Deut 6:4-9) the adults were told to have the commands of God "on their hearts" before they were told to "teach them diligently" to their children. Nelson (2008) states that

belonging to a congregation forms one's spiritual life because belonging influences a person to be like the group. Thus, the regular interaction of church members is a powerful form of education because it influences the perspective by which members interpret the Christian faith. (p. 97)

This includes members of all ages. For instance,

if congregations understood that the church is exactly the place teenagers need to voice their doubts and still be accepted, then congregations would provide the kind of study and practice of Christian living that teenagers need to upgrade their image of God to adult status. (p. 65)

Lawrence Kohlberg (1970), a Harvard professor who specialized in research on moral education and reasoning, stated that “the phrase [hidden curriculum] indicates that children are learning much in school that is not formal curriculum, and the phrase also asks whether such learning is truly educative” (p. 105). Martin (1983) elaborates on the idea of hidden curriculum by pointing out that “it is not just formal educational settings which have hidden curricula. Any setting can have one and most do” (p. 134). When she asserts that hidden curricula exist in nonschool settings, she considers it not only legitimate but also “theoretically important that we recognize explicitly that hidden curricula can be found anywhere learning states are found” (p. 134).

In light of Martin’s elaboration, a corollary statement to Kohlberg’s might be that the phrase *hidden curriculum* indicates that younger and/or less mature disciples are learning much at home, school, and church that is not discipleship or intentional religious education curriculum, and the phrase also asks whether such learning is helping them grow in spiritual maturity and likeness to Christ. Collinson (2005) remarks that “desirable attitudes and values are influenced more by the hidden curriculum than by intentional teaching” (p. 189).

In testing the Growing Disciples in Community model, indicators of equipping are drawn from the hidden discipling curriculum of personal faith and

relational attitudes of family, friends, teachers, and fellow church members rather than from any formal or nonformal discipleship curriculum.

Modeling, mentors, and authoritative community

In “Spiritual Modeling: A Key to Spiritual and Religious Growth?”, an essay written for *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, Oman and Thoresen (2003) note that “most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling.” They therefore believe it would be potentially powerful to “give people the tools to establish effective relationships with individually appropriate spiritual models whose lives facilitate the observational learning of important spiritual skills” (p. 158), which they have termed observational spiritual learning.

The Commission on Children at Risk (2003) reported that young people were in a crisis in the United States because of lack of connectedness with

authoritative communities,” defined as “groups that live out the types of connectedness that our children increasingly lack. They are groups of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life. (p. 6)

The Commission did not necessarily equate “authoritative communities” with the communities of disciples one would hope would be peopling Christian churches.

However, qualitative research done by Nuesch-Olver (2005) on college freshmen at a Christian university “underscored the power of mentoring and accountability in their faith journey. To a person, they used language that clearly illustrated their conviction that relationships were of higher importance in the shaping of their faith than programming” (p. 101). “All the students who wrote about practicing steady

spiritual disciplines of personal prayer and scripture reading, pointed to a love relationship with Christ modeled by their mentors” (Nuesch-Olver, 2005, p. 19).

Role models and social capital

Christian Smith (2003), researcher in the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), considered the “existing theoretical explanations for . . . religious effects” in the lives of young people disjointed and fragmented. He attempted “to formulate a more systematic, integrated, and coherent account of religion’s constructive influence in the lives of American youth” (p. 17). He suggests the following:

Religion may exert positive, constructive influences in the lives of American youth through nine distinct but connected and potentially mutually reinforcing factors. These nine distinct factors cluster as groups of three beneath three larger conceptual dimensions of social influence. These three larger dimensions are (1) moral order, (2) learned competencies, and (3) social and organizational ties. The nine specific factors that exert the religious influences are: (1) moral directives, (2) spiritual experiences, (3) role models, (4) community and leadership skills, (5) coping skills, (6) cultural capital, (7) social capital, (8) network closure, and (9) extra-community links. (p. 19)

Factors from Smith’s theory that were used to undergird the Growing Disciples in Community model of discipling adolescents are the moral-order factor of “role models” and the social and organizational ties factor of “social capital.” By the moral-order dimension Smith (2003) is suggesting the idea of “substantive cultural traditions grounded upon and promoting particular normative ideas of what is good and bad, right and wrong, higher and lower, worthy and unworthy, just and unjust, and so on, which orient human consciousness and motivate human action” (p. 20). By the social and organizational ties dimension of religious influences, Smith is referring to “structures of relations that affect the opportunities

and constraints that young people face, which profoundly affect outcomes in their lives” (p. 25).

About his factor of “role models” under the dimension of “moral order,” Smith (2003) states,

American religions can provide youth with adult and peer-group role models, providing examples of life practices shaped by religious moral orders that constructively influence the lives of youth, and offering positive relationships that youth may be invested in preserving through their own normatively approved living. (p. 22)

About his factor of “social capital” under the dimension of “social and organizational ties,” Smith (2003) states,

American religion is one of the few, major American social institutions that is not rigidly age stratified and emphasizes personal interactions over time, thus providing youth with personal access to other adult members in their religious communities, affording cross-generational network ties with the potential to provide extra-familial, trusting relationships of care and accountability, and linking youth to wider sources of helpful information, resources, and opportunities. (p. 25)

It is this role-modeling and intergenerational social capital that can supply the need Samra (2003) sees for imitation, that Nelson (2008) sees for an upgrade of our young people’s image of God, and that Oman and Thoresen (2003) see for observational spiritual learning.

Even though Smith (2003) talks about “extra-familial, trusting relationships of care and accountability” as coming from the religious community other than parents, the role-modeling and intergenerational social capital work across the lines of social impact and include everyone in a young person’s life who claims to be a Christian or a disciple of Christ. That includes Christian families, Christian peers, Christian faculty and staff in institutions of formal Christian education, as well as

everyone involved in the local church community—whether they feel they are directly connected to the young person or not. Everyone is role-modeling and providing social capital—positively or negatively.

Family and friends—the first village

In the *Review of Religious Research* it was pointed out that it “indeed ‘takes a village’ to socialize a child religiously” (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003, p. 252), but that the family is the first village. Reviewing literature of the late 1980s, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) summarized that

parents establish “religious capital” for their children upon which children’s religious beliefs and attitudes may grow (Iannaccone, 1990), and parents’ practices and beliefs constitute a “personal religious community” (Cornwall, 1987) that conveys a “religious salience” (Hoge & Zulueta, 1985) and provides “cognitive anchors” (Ozark, 1989) for children’s development. (p. 252)

Black (2008) did quantitative and qualitative research to determine “future church attendance of youth beyond high school” (p. 55). He created a Lasting Faith Scale. While church attendance is not the same thing as discipleship, it is a highly correlated product of active discipleship. Black reported,

The significant findings from the surveys and the themes from the interviews were compared and analyzed and the resulting framework indicated four domains of influence on continued faithfulness in church attendance following high school graduation. These four domains were:

- Discipleship and spiritual depth
- Family influences
- Mentoring and intergenerational influences
- Relationships. (p. 55)

In their own research, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) attempted “to analyze the frequency, structure, and content of parent-child communication about religion” (p. 253). They hoped that the information they gathered would “help build theories

about religious socialization” (p. 253). They were suggesting a bi-directional rather than a unidirectional style of communication that would be “akin to an authoritative parenting milieu in which parents value their children’s views” (p. 254). They found that “the most common contexts for religious conversations were prayer, bed time, and meals” (p. 258). Studying children between the ages of 3 and 12, they found that survey responses in which parents reported that they talked with their children nearly every day were not corroborated by diaries that were kept of the actual conversations. They also found that the children initiated the conversations equally with parents and that parents tended to give answers rather than to help the children explore their own thinking and to share their own thinking process on the topic (p. 252).

Building on previous research about parent-child religious conversations, Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) built a conceptual model that summarized the “variations in conversational processes” that they found in the qualitative research. As was suggested with the younger children studied by Boyatzis and Janicki (2003), Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) found that when “parent-adolescent religious conversations” were youth-centered the experience was more positive for both the parents and the adolescents (p. 611).

Whatever the direction of the conversations about religion, Gunnoe and Moore (2002) reported the following from their longitudinal study on youth aged 17 to 22:

Religiosity during young adulthood is best predicted by the presence of religious role models during childhood and adolescence. Religious youth tended to have religious friends during high school and religious mothers. . . . In keeping with social learning theorists’ tenets that learners are more likely to imitate role

models they positively regard, highly supportive religious mothers were particularly likely to foster religiosity in their children. (p. 620)

Smith and Denton (2005) state that “a lot of research in the sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people’s religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents” (p. 56). They concluded, “In sum, therefore, we think that the best general rule of thumb that parents might use to reckon their children’s most likely religious outcomes is this: ‘We’ll get what we are’” (p. 57). (Also see Bader & Desmond, 2006.)

Church and church school—the rest of the village

If the “first village” is the family in religious socialization of the young, the rest of the village is the church and all those associated with it. Goodliff says that in the postmodern society “family is too fragile an institution to bear the burden of responsibility we placed upon it” (as cited in Collinson, 2004, p. 194). Collinson continues to quote and to comment on Goodliff regarding the role of the church in the face of family breakdown in society:

“The church, not the family, is the institution that primarily conveys God’s grace and is the community to which we owe our prime allegiance.” His belief strongly supports our contention that the household of faith, the discipling community, is ideally suited to the task of nurturing the spiritual development of its members no matter what the nature of their home or family environment. As the faith community with its multiplicity of gifts carries out the mission of Christ to the world, it can provide an effective environment in which children and adults are nurtured to grow and develop to the full extent of their potential. (p. 194)

In 2000, faculty and students in the Graduate School of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary reviewed “the empirical literature regarding mentoring relationships with adolescents. . . . The sparse literature addressing mentor influences on adolescent religious beliefs” paid special attention to “the manner in

which mentoring supports faith development” (Aoki et al., 2000, p. 377).

“Anecdotal reports . . . suggest that mentoring is the essential element in youth discipleship” (Aoki et al., 2000, p. 378). The research that the team reviewed broadly defined “mentoring as the establishment of a personal relationship between a non-parental adult and an adolescent” (p. 378). Even though the nature and content of the various relationships they studied varied, “their purpose is to encourage, support, and motivate young people” (p. 378). They go on to say that “the Christian tradition of discipleship might be considered a subcategory of mentoring, where the focus of discipleship is on nurturing a young person’s faith within the context of daily experience” (p. 378). They consider there to be a “great deal of conceptual overlap between mentoring and the Christian tradition of discipleship. Nevertheless, there is little empirical data evaluating the impact of mentoring or discipleship on adolescent faith development” (p. 378).

Lambert (2004) attempted a study that would provide direction for those interested in scholarly research in the area of ministry to youth. In order to try to ascertain the most pressing needs for research, he used a “consensus-building strategy,” taking information and opinions from experts in the field and trying to come to a sense of agreement on important topics. He also found that the faith development of youth was rated highly by experts and practitioners as an area needing research. The second area receiving high support was the area of relationships (pp. 79, 80).

In their recommendations to the church, Aoki et al. (2000) suggested that “opportunities for ‘hanging out’ and informal interaction should be integrated into

the program so that youth can see adults as approachable and available just to talk. Although contemporary culture often labels 'just talking' as non-productive, it is essential to building relationships" (p. 382). In becoming involved in discipling a young person, "an appropriate role for the mentor in this situation is to come alongside the adolescent, modeling Christian virtues and beliefs, without pushing the adolescent to champion the cause of the church" (p. 382).

Aoki et al. (2000) conclude with the following:

Although the church should not lose sight of its directive to make disciples of all nations, neither can it neglect the important task of nurturing its own adolescents. . . . The nuclear family remains the most fertile ground for nurturing our young. Nevertheless, the church cannot leave this important task exclusively to parents—who often struggle themselves to balance work and family. . . . The health of our youth depends upon the strengths of an entire community. (p. 383)

By "church" as an "entire community" is not meant the church with the most well-developed youth ministry. Gibson (2004) claims that "youth ministries must be willing to sacrifice numbers before sacrificing scriptural teaching that calls for a united community of believers working together for the same cause—glorifying the name of Jesus throughout the world" (p. 12).

Gibson (2004) goes on to predict that a sense of connectedness in community may, in fact, keep young people from exiting the church:

When teenagers recognize the essential nature of the church in their spiritual growth, come to see their importance to the church, and realize the relevance of the church in society, . . . a likelihood exists that they will not exit the church at the point of late adolescence. . . . Instead, because they experienced connectivity within their congregations during the spiritually pivotal stage of adolescence, students will remain active in the church even upon graduating high school. (pp. 12, 13)

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to find, in both Scripture and current literature, answers for the questions What is discipleship? How is discipleship accomplished? and What is involved in prompting discipleship? Looking at various definitions, aims, purposes, and models, it appears that discipleship and discipling are intrinsically related.

The Growing Disciples in Community model involves processes that are based in Scripture, supported by the social sciences, and that umbrella the elements found in a wide sampling of discipleship/discipling models.

Connecting with God and others is based on the two great commandments of Matt 22. The benefits of connecting are spelled out in much of the literature on spirituality and the need for community.

Understanding God through His Word is based on Matt 7:24-27 and John 8:31 and is the method for transformation based on 2 Cor 3:18. Little literature in the social sciences is at all related to this process of discipleship.

Ministering to others is firmly based on innumerable passages of Scripture related to God's missions of revelation (Matt 10:24-27), of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19), and of restoration (Acts 3:12) and our involvement with Him in fulfilling them on this earth. Social science research points out the tendency of young people involved with religion to be more involved in altruistic and humanitarian activities, which are ways in which they minister and participate in God's mission.

Equipping one another is rooted in Eph 4:15, 16 and Deut 6:4-9. Discipling is the term that correlates well with this construct. Other ideas that parallel and

enrich, or in other ways are related to it, are *imitation, hidden curriculum, modeling, mentoring, authoritative community, and role models and social capital*. All Christians—from the family, friends, church school, or church congregation—are, either actively or passively, discipling and equipping the adolescents they come in contact with as those adolescents choose to be disciples of Christ or choose not to be.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study tested a discipleship model that includes processes that relate to both personal discipleship and discipling others—(a) connecting: relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others, (b) understanding: learning the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word, (c) ministering: participating in God’s mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration, and (d) equipping: intentionally walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden, 2003, p. 129).

The model is intended to be used to build a curriculum framework for effective discipling and religious education for everyone within the local church. However, in this study, an adolescent population was used to test the model in the hope that something would be learned that will be helpful in addressing the problematic theme of young people in their 20s leaving active church life as soon as they can (Black, 2008; Dudley, 1983, 2000; Martin, 2008/2009).

In order to observe how relationships with Christian adults and friends impact Christian adolescents’ self-reported involvement with the processes of discipleship as defined by the Growing Disciples in Community model in this study, I

looked at data gathered during the 2000 school year from 16,000 adolescents affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States and Canada. There was a large amount of data available from this study of the faith maturity of teenagers (approximately ages 13-18) to create and test the model.

Research Design

The basic research design was secondary data analysis of the Valuegenesis² survey items. Valuegenesis², sponsored by the Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Education, involved 6th- to 12th-grade students who were enrolled in schools affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. The original survey was designed to measure faith maturity, the name given for the balance between two scales blending a vertical dimension (attempting to measure a rich, close relationship with God) and a horizontal dimension (attempting to measure care and compassion for others).

The large amount of data gathered in the 396-item questionnaire seemed to provide a sufficient number of items with which to create scales that would test the discipleship model presented in this study. The main advantage to this secondary data collection method is the availability of a much larger and more diverse sample than would otherwise be possible for an individual researcher with only personal funding to obtain.

From the Valuegenesis² items I created scales based on my conceptual framework for the individual process of discipleship and the corporate process of discipling. The scale created for the discipling process was further divided into

items relating to equipping in the family, with friends, with Christian teachers, and in the local Christian church congregation.

According to Vogt (1999, p. 281), a structural model describes causal relations among latent variables (“underlying characteristics that cannot be observed or measured directly,” p. 154) and includes coefficients for endogenous variables (“variables that are an inherent part of the system being studied and the value of which is determined in the system,” p. 96). This analysis makes it possible to observe whether individual variables are affected by other individual variables in some order that affects the whole relationship. Measures of association are used to measure the relationships.

Through these statistical procedures it is possible to see whether adolescents’ self-reported scores on scales hypothesized to measure levels of connecting with God and others, understanding one’s relationship with God through Jesus the Word, and ministering and serving others, correlate with scores reported by the same adolescents about the attitudes and behaviors of their family, friends, Christian teachers, and the local congregation in relation to the corporate process of equipping.

This study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to see whether the theoretical covariance matrix defined by the conceptual model (see Figure 2) was consistent with the empirical covariance matrix. Equipping is the exogenous variable (independent), and the other latent (not observed) variables are the endogenous variables (dependent). My objective was to test the hypothesized quantitative model to capture the relationship among

the variables specified in the model. SEM entails two types of models: a structural model and a measurement model. This research focused primarily on the structural model.

Population and Sample

The population for the Valuegenesis² survey was 6th- through 12th-grade students enrolled in schools affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North American Division. Some 16,000 out of 21,000 surveys sent out were completed and returned. The breakdown by grade and gender of the 11,481 cases finally used in studies of the data is found in Table 1.

“In the case of the *Valuegenesis* surveys, there was no sample; they were both done as a census. Effort was made to obtain responses from the entire population of Adventist students in Adventist schools, grades 6 through 12” (Gillespie et al., 2004).

Table 1

Valuegenesis² Respondents by Grade and Gender

Grade	Female	Male	Grade total
6 th	677	635	1,312
7 th	893	725	1,618
8 th	919	841	1,760
9 th	925	845	1,770
10 th	943	868	1,811
11 th	899	746	1,645
12 th	851	714	1,565
Total	6,107	5,374	11,481

Procedure and Instrumentation of Valuegenesis² Research

The Valuegenesis² survey that is used in this study was conducted 10 years after the original Valuegenesis study. The first Valuegenesis “instrument was based on a similar questionnaire used by Search Institute in a study of adolescents and adults in six major Protestant denominations” (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992, p. 13). According to the researchers, “[a] number of measures, some new, some old, have been employed in this survey [Valuegenesis²] in order to (a) allow comparability with earlier Valuegenesis research; (b) allow the inclusion of useful measures that were not included in the earlier version; (c) correct shortcomings of some earlier approaches; and (d) delete items that were uninformative, or that did not provide information of unique value” (John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, 2002, p. 1).

“The field research was conducted by the John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry of La Sierra University, Riverside, California, under the guidance of a *Valuegenesis* coordinating committee” (Gillespie et al., 2004, pp. 18, 19).

The result was a 396-item survey, the length of which was “due largely to the inclusion of a number of scales: collections of items, closely related to one another, all measuring the same ‘thing’—an underlying concept or content area” (John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, 2002, p. 1). Scales were used, in part, to avoid interpretation errors to which individual survey items are subject. With such broad and important concepts to measure as “denominational loyalty” and “faith maturity,” multiple item scales allowed for such errors to cancel each other out (John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, 2002).

The Valuegenesis² scales dealt with such areas as faith maturity, altruism, understanding of grace and works, belief orthodoxy, life values, congregational climate and faith-related experiences, attitude toward Adventist schools and school climate, faith conversations with parents and family climate, and description of friends, as well as intrinsic/extrinsic religious orientation.

Reliability of the Valuegenesis² Data

In order to increase accuracy and reliability of the Valuegenesis² survey data, the researchers went through a process of “prudently reducing the likelihood” of deliberately misleading or completely random answers.

Beginning with a data set of 16,020 scanned surveys, “a series of criteria was applied to delete surveys from the data set” (John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, 2002, p. 2). Surveys with the following anomalies were deleted: grade or gender missing; school, school type, conference, or denomination missing or incorrect; drinking parties, club dancing, or movie theaters more than once daily; or the “at-risk” scale “maxed out” (John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, 2002).

Procedure for This Study

An informal e-mail correspondence was conducted with Dr. Bailey Gillespie, representing the Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Education regarding my interest in using Valuegenesis² data that I had obtained from the Andrews University School of Education.

After studying the scales used in the Valuegenesis² study, as well as studying each of the 396 individual items separately, it was decided that those scales provided items relating to all the processes used in the Growing Disciples in Community model, and therefore it was possible to create new scales from the Valuegenesis² items for use in this study.

Instrumentation for This Study: Validity of the Scales

The scales used to test the Growing Disciples in Community model were created based on a theological construct of discipleship articulated in the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 1, as well as the educational theory of the hidden (Tonelson, 1981), secret (Kozol, 1972), or unstudied curriculum (Overly, 1970). The new scales were first sent to others working on a project using similar constructs for input regarding the scales' content validity. After editing, the scales were then sent to specialists in adolescent spiritual formation and discipleship to test for face validity.

For the Connecting scale (relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others), items were chosen for which the respondents self-reported devotional activities, a positive sense of God, and self-initiated contact/relationship with others (see Table 2).

For the Understanding scale (learning the truth of God's relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word), items were chosen that reflected core beliefs about God's relationship with humanity (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Growing Disciples in Community Scales With Conceptual Definitions and Valuegenesis²
Survey Items of Which They Consist*

Scale name	Conceptual definition	Items
Connecting	Relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others (John 13:35; Matt. 22:37-38).	1, 5, 6, 11, 13, 25, 37, 104, 105, 176, 197, 234, 263, 265, 266, 267, 272, 274, 275, 315, 316, 328
Understanding	Learning the truth of God's relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word (John 8:31; Matt. 4:4).	40, 41, 45, 53, 55, 69, 74, 75, 76, 77, 84
Ministering	Participating in God's mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration (Matt. 28:19; Matt. 25:40).	3, 4, 7, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 102, 106, 244, 256
Equipping	Intentionally walking "alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ" (Ogden, 2003) (Eph. 4:15-16; Deut. 6:4-9).	<p>In the family: 247, 248, 249, 250, 253, 260</p> <p>With friends: 27, 28, 30, 34, 251, 342, 344, 345</p> <p>With teachers: 208, 210, 243, 252, 335</p> <p>In the local congregation: 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 97, 215, 216, 218, 258, 261, 262</p>

Note. Items are listed in Appendix A.

For the Ministering scale (participating in God’s mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration), items were chosen that recorded self-reported intent or actual activity relating to the welfare and well-being of others (see Table 2).

The Equipping scale (intentionally walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” [Ogden, 2003]) was subdivided into equipping in the family, with friends, with church school personnel, and equipping in the local congregation (see Table 2).

The at-risk subgroups were created based on how the respondents answered the following questions: Q59—Have you ever experienced sexual abuse?, Q113—Have you now, or have you ever been involved in any eating disorder?, Q203—Have you ever tried to kill yourself?, and Q229—Have you ever been physically abused by an adult?

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The first statistical step was using the structural equation modeling software Amos 7 to do confirmatory factor analysis (in order to determine discriminant, convergent, and construct validity) on the various scales reported in Table 2. I used the maximum likelihood parameter estimation because the data were distributed normally (Kline, 2005). Based on this factor analysis and a further look at the theoretical model, all the scales were reduced in size.

In the scale for Equipping in the Family, Question 250—How much has your grandparent’s faith helped you develop your religious faith? was eliminated, even

though it had a standardized regression weight (maximum likelihood estimate) of .547, which was significant (better than the .370 weight for Question 260—In the last few years, how often did you do or participate in family projects to help other people?). Question 250 was eliminated based on the theoretical consideration that the question could be much more about whether there was a grandparent involved in an adolescent's life at all than about whether or not that grandparent's faith was influential in the adolescent's own discipleship experience. Question 260, about family projects, was retained based on the theoretical base of Deut 6:4-9, which indicates that the methodology of discipling/equipping is for adults to do things with adolescents that gives them an opportunity to share their religious values.

In the scale for equipping with friends, Q344—My friends belong to church-sponsored groups for teenagers—was eliminated because it had the lowest regression weight (.358) of any of the other indicators of the latent variable *equipping* with friends. The decision was reinforced by the theory that this question might be affected by the discrepancy there was in the size of the churches the adolescents attended and whether or not they had any church-sponsored youth groups to attend.

In the scale for equipping with Christian teachers, two items were eliminated. Q252—How much has the teacher's faith helped you develop your religious faith?—was eliminated, because in the initial data analysis it was shown to not be significantly predicted by the latent variable. The scale was also reduced by Q335—How willing are your teachers at your school to talk about sensitive issues (sex, drugs, etc.)? Even though this question was significantly ($p < .00$) predicted by the

latent variable, it had a low regression weight (maximum likelihood estimate) of .379, and theoretically it was not involved directly with the discipleship issues being considered in this model.

In the scale for equipping in the local church, four items (Q215, Q216, Q218, and Q258) were eliminated. All four questions dealt specifically with adult leaders in the local congregation and were not about the congregation as a unit, which is the theoretical construct behind equipping in the local church. Also, these indicators' errors had many error correlations with other latent variables' indicators, suggesting that they may be more significantly correlated with another latent variable not being considered in this model.

The equipping items retained for the final model fit are summarized in Table 3, along with their standardized regression weights.

The first change made to the discipleship scales after the initial analysis was done was to move Q1—I help others with their religious questions and struggles, which was shown to have a low regression weight with the latent variable Connecting with God and others (.214), to be an indicator of the latent variable Ministering, with which it was more highly correlated (.484) in that analysis. Switching the loading of this indicator to the different factor substantially improved the fit of the data to the model.

The personal discipleship scales were also analyzed and reduced further. The Connecting scale was reduced from 22 items to 6 items. Of these 6, 3 were about connecting with God (Q272, Q315, Q316), and 3 were about connecting with others (Q25, Q105, Q275). The Understanding scale was reduced from 11 items to 6 items.

The 6 items retained were considered to measure the most seminal beliefs about the dynamics of humanity's relationship with God (Q45, Q69, Q74, Q75, Q77, Q78). The Ministering scale was reduced from 14 items to 5 items (Q1, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22). The items retained were those measuring participation in ministry activities that would be most accessible to adolescents.

The original scales were created with every question on the Valuegenesis² survey that was considered by both the researcher and content experts to measure the discipleship constructs (see Table 2). The questions retained for this study were those with the highest correlation to the latent variables, as well as the most congruence with the theoretical constructs.

The discipleship items retained for the final model fit are summarized in Table 4 along with their standardized regression weights. Two of the items had low regression weights (.337 and .338) but were significant when predicted by the latent variable for which they were indicators (Connecting and Ministering, respectively) and were deemed essential to the theoretical constructs of those latent variables.

The confirmatory factor analysis revealed that in the hypothesized structural model (see Figure 2) the correlation between the latent variables Discipleship and Connecting was so high as to suggest that these two factors were not distinct (i.e., had poor discriminant validity). A review of the theory confirmed that discipleship is composed of connections with God and with others—resulting in an increased understanding of our relationship with God and an increased commitment to ministering to others. Post-hoc, the model was modified accordingly (see Figure 3).

Table 3

Items Retained for SEM Scales—Equipping in the Family, With Friends, With Christian Teachers, and in the Local Church

Item #	Question	Construct and correlation
247	How much has family worship helped you develop your religious faith?	In the family (.64)
248	How much has your mother's faith helped you develop your religious faith?	In the family (.70)
249	How much has your father's faith helped you develop your religious faith?	In the family (.61)
253	How much did the family you grew up in help you develop your religious faith?	In the family (.69)
260	In the last few years, how often did you participate in family projects to help others?	In the family (.40)
27	How important is it to you to have friends who encourage you to meet good goals?	With friends (.48)
28	How important is it to you to have friends who help keep you out of trouble?	With friends (.44)
30	How important is it to you to have friends who are a good influence on you?	With friends (.54)
34	How important is it to you to have friends who attend religious services regularly?	With friends (.50)
251	How much has your friends' faith helped you develop your religious faith?	With friends (.55)
342	My friends attend church almost every week.	With friends (.38)
345	My friends are very religious-minded.	With friends (.50)

Table 3—*Continued.*

208	Teachers are interested in students.	With Christian teachers (.43)
210	Teachers listen to what their students say.	With Christian teachers (.42)
243	How much has the Bible teacher helped you develop your religious faith?	With Christian teachers (.62)
87	My local church feels warm.	In the local church (.75)
88	I learn a lot there.	In the local church (.74)
89	My church accepts people who are different.	In the local church (.65)
91	My church is friendly.	In the local church (.73)
93	My church encourages me to ask questions.	In the local church (.67)
94	Strangers feel welcome at my church.	In the local church (.72)
95	My church expects people to learn and think.	In the local church (.59)
97	My church provides fellowship.	In the local church (.77)
261	In the last few years, how often did you experience the feeling that adults in your church care about you?	In the local church (.51)
262	In the last few years, how often did you experience the feeling that youth in your local church care about you?	In the local church (.37)

Table 4

Items Retained for SEM Scales—Connecting With God and Others, Understanding Humanity's Relationship With God, and Ministering to and Serving Others

Item #	Question	Construct and correlation
272	How interested are you in programs that would help you learn more about gaining a deeper relationship with God?	Connecting— with God (.706)
315	It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer.	Connecting— with God (.634)
316	I have often had a strong sense of God's presence.	Connecting— with God (.613)
25	How important is it to you to have friends who you can talk to about spiritual things?	Connecting— with others (.643)
105	How important is it to you to show love to other people?	Connecting— with others (.337)
275	How interested are you in programs that would help you learn more about how to talk to a friend about faith?	Connecting— with others (.621)
45	I am loved by God even when I sin.	Understanding (.548)
69	The body is the temple of God, and we are responsible in every area of life for its care.	Understanding (.580)
74	God, the Holy Spirit, teaches us how much we need Jesus in our lives, draws us to Jesus, and makes us like Him.	Understanding (.473)

Table 4—*Continued.*

75	The first man and woman, created as free beings in the image of God, chose to rebel against God. We have inherited fallen nature along with all its consequences.	Understanding (.536)
77	The church is God's family on earth, a community of faith in which many members, all equal in Christ, join for worship, instruction and service.	Understanding (.595)
84	After the millennium, God will recreate the earth as a perfect, eternal home of the redeemed. Sin will never exist again.	Understanding (.447)
1	I help others with their religious questions and struggles.	Ministering (.619)
18	How often during the last year did you try directly to encourage someone to believe in Jesus?	Ministering (.748)
19	How often during the last year have you told others about the work of God in your life?	Ministering (.813)
21	How often during the last year did you help people who are poor, hungry, sick, or unable to care for themselves?	Ministering (.338)
22	How many volunteer hours do you spend during the average month helping friends or neighbors with problems they have?	Ministering (.486)

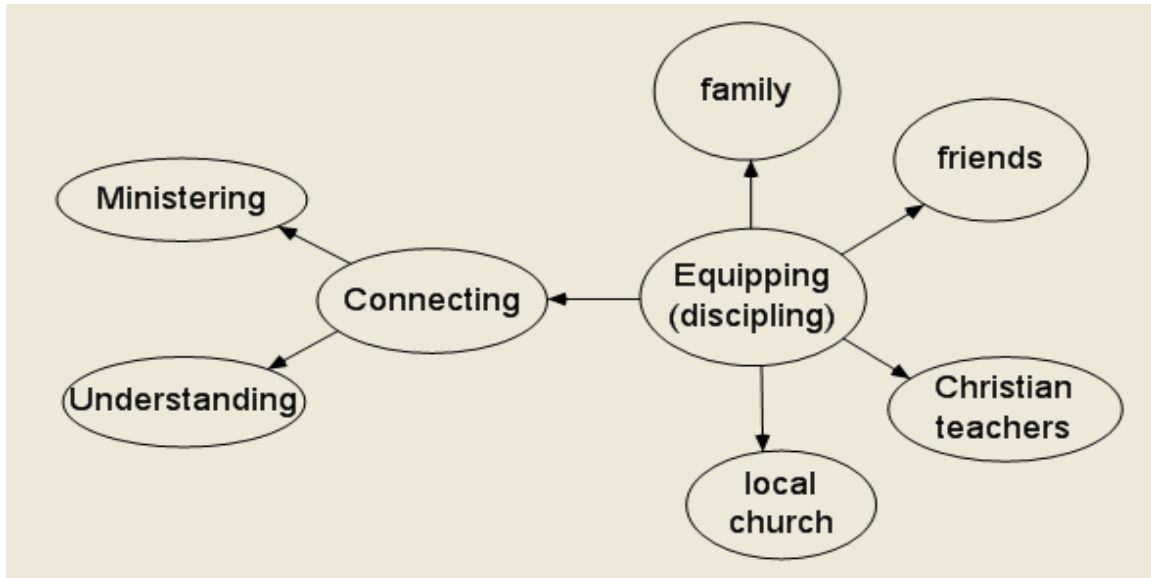


Figure 3. Growing Disciples in Community hypothesized structural model (after confirmatory factor analysis).

The final scales used in testing the model fit are listed in Table 5 along with their Chronbach's coefficient alpha as an estimate of reliability.

Research Questions

1. Is the theoretical covariance matrix in the Growing Disciples in Community structural model (see Figure 3) consistent with the empirical covariance matrix?
2. What are the relationships between the corporate process of equipping (in the family, with friends, with Christian teachers, and in the local church) and each of the personal discipleship processes (connecting, understanding, and ministering) of adolescents?
3. Is the model stable across gender, age, ethnicity, and at-risk conditions?

Table 5

*Growing Disciples in Community Scales With Conceptual Definitions and Valuegenesis²
Survey Items of Which They Consist*

Scale names	Conceptual definition	Items	Chronbach's alpha
Connecting	Relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others (John 13:35; Matt 22:37-38).	25, 105, 272, 275, 315, 316	.781
Understanding	Learning the truth of God's relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word (John 8:31; Matt 4:4).	45, 69, 74, 75, 77, 84	.647
Ministering	Participating in God's mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration (Matt 28:19; Matt 25:40).	1, 18, 19, 21, 22	.750
Equipping	Intentionally walking "alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ" (Ogden, 2003) (Eph 4:15-16; Deut 6:4-9).	In the family: 247, 248, 249, 253, 260	.799
		With friends: 27, 28, 30, 34, 251, 342, 345	.727
		With teachers: 208, 210, 243	.591
		In the local church: 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 97, 261, 262	.897

Note. Items are listed in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

This study began with 11,481 cases that remained after the Valuegenesis² coordinating committee deleted surveys with anomalies such as deliberately misleading or completely random answers (see Table 1). The number of cases was further reduced to 8,284 (see Table 5) when 3,197 cases were found to have missing data in the observed variables that were being used for this study.

In order to test for outliers ($\chi^2 = 4$; $df = 18.467$, $p < .01$), four items (Q001, Q005, Q006, and Q011) were used to create a new variable based on the Mahalanobis distance (D) statistic. Nine multivariate outliers were identified with Mahalanobis distance greater than 18.5. Because of the small ratio of multivariate outliers to overall number of cases, it was not considered necessary to eliminate the outliers.

Maximum Likelihood Estimation assumes a multivariate normal distribution for the endogenous variables. It was also assumed that the sample size of 8,284 cases was large enough for the study with 44 observed variables. Using Amos 7 software, the relationships among latent and observed variables were analyzed with structural equation modeling, which, according to Vogt (1999), describes causal relations among latent variables (“underlying characteristics that cannot be observed or measured directly” [p. 154]) and includes coefficients for endogenous variables (“variables that are an inherent part of the system being studied and the value of which is determined in the system” [p. 96]).

Summary

This chapter describes the use of secondary data taken from the Valuegenesis² study to test a model of discipleship. It describes the population, sample, and basic characteristics of the sample. It looks at the instrumentation, the procedure, and the research questions, as well as how the data were analyzed.

The following chapter, chapter 4, is a discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to test a conceptual model of discipleship using a structural equation model with empirical data. To obtain acceptable levels of construct validity for a theoretical model, a researcher needs to assess the theoretical relationships among constructs in the model and compare them with empirical findings. For this reason, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the theory-based relationships indicated in the conceptual model of Growing Disciples in Community. SEM is “an extension of the general linear model (GLM) that enables a researcher to test a set of regression equations simultaneously” (Grajales, 2009). With this statistical methodology it is possible to evaluate the entire model, bringing a higher-level perspective to the analysis (Grajales, 2009).

Overview of Chapter

In this chapter the results that were obtained by analyzing the data according to the hypothesized model, using SEM, are explained. First, descriptive statistics regarding the final sample from Valuegenesis² data that was used in the analysis are presented. Then the hypotheses are compared with the measurement and the structural models. Finally, the model is applied to various sub-groups within the

sample—gender groups, age groups, ethnic groups, and at-risk groups to see whether the model fits these sub-groupings of the sample similarly to the way it fits the sample from the complete database.

The Sample

In order to get the most accurate data for this study and to fully use the capabilities of the SEM software, Amos 7, in testing the Growing Disciples in Community model, all subjects with missing answers were deleted from the data set. The final number in the data set was 8,284 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Valuegenesis² Respondents Used for Growing Disciples in Community Model by Grade and Gender

Grade	Female	Male	Grade total
6 th	424	400	824
7 th	581	472	1,053
8 th	642	581	1,223
9 th	679	572	1,251
10 th	740	635	1,375
11 th	743	582	1,325
12 th	674	559	1,233
Total	4,483	3,801	8,284

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. Is the theoretical covariance matrix in the Growing Disciples in Community structural model (see Figure 3) consistent with the empirical covariance matrix?
2. What are the relationships between the corporate process of equipping (in the family, with friends, with Christian teachers, and in the local church) and the personal discipleship processes (connecting, understanding, and ministering) of adolescents?
3. Is the model stable across cohorts made up of gender, age, ethnicity, and at-risk conditions?

In the Growing Disciples in Community model, equipping is operationalized as intentionally walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden, 2003, p. 129). In the language of the items from the Valuegenesis² survey chosen for the scales in this study it might be paraphrased as talking openly with adolescents and sharing one’s religious faith, as well as creating a warm, yet thought-provoking environment in which adolescents can develop their own faith.

The hypothesis upon which the Growing Disciples in Community is based is that an increase in adolescents’ reporting of this equipping behavior in the family, with friends, with Christian teachers, and in the local church congregation will cause increased self-reported scores by the adolescents in the processes of discipleship—connecting, understanding, and ministering. Figure 3 is the graphic representation of the hypothesized model that was tested to see how well it fit the observed data.

“Unobserved variables are termed latent factors, factors, or constructs and are depicted graphically with circles or ovals” (Schreiber, Amaury, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006, p. 323).

“Within the context of structural modeling, exogenous variables represent those constructs that exert an influence on other constructs under study and are not influenced by other factors in the quantitative model” (Schreiber et al., 2006, p. 325). In the Growing Disciples in Community conceptual model, Equipping is the exogenous variable. “The constructs identified as endogenous are affected by exogenous and other endogenous variables in the model” (p. 325). In the Growing Disciples in Community conceptual model, all other latent variables (represented by ovals) are endogenous variables (Figure 4).

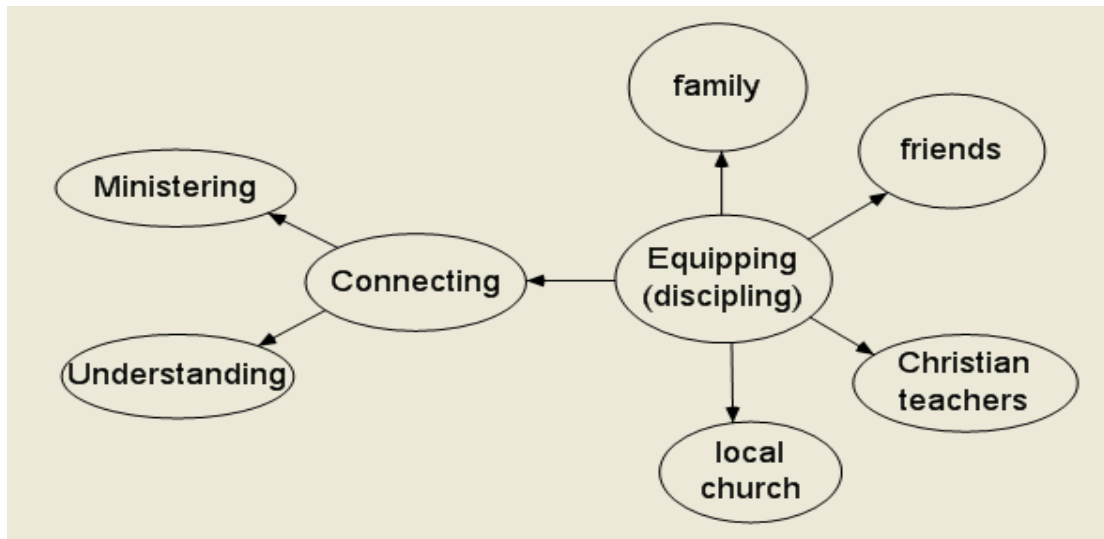


Figure 4. Growing Disciples in Community structural model.

The objective of the SEM analysis was to test the hypothesized quantitative model to capture the relationship among the variables specified in the model. SEM entails two types of models: a structural model and a measurement model. This research focused primarily on the structural model shown in Figure 4. The measurement model can be found in Appendix C.

Validity of the Growing Disciples in Community Model

The first step in validating the model was to test the hypothesis that the theoretical covariance matrix was consistent with the empirical covariance matrix. I chose maximum likelihood parameter estimation over other estimation methods because the data were distributed normally. The hypothesized model appears to be a good fit to the data. Estimation of the model produced the following goodness-of-fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 10889.1$, $df = 785$, $p = .000$, CFI = .917, and RMSEA = .039. The comparative fit index (CFI)

is one of a class of fit statistics known as **incremental** or **comparative fit indexes**, which are among the most widely used in SEM. All these assess the relative improvement in fit of the researcher's model compared with a **baseline model**. . . . A rule of thumb for the CFI and other incremental indexes is that values greater than roughly .90 may indicate reasonably good fit of the researcher's model. (Kline, 2005, p. 140)

The root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) "is a **parsimony-adjusted index** in that its formula includes a built-in correction for model complexity. This means that given two models with similar overall explanatory power for the same data, the simpler model will be favored" (Kline, 2005, p. 137). A value of zero indicates the best fit, and higher values indicate worse fit.

The theoretical covariance matrix was shown to be consistent with the empirical covariance matrix. The model presented in Figure 4 fits the data well, answering the first research question.

Intercorrelation Among Variables

The correlations for the various relationships in the model, answering the second research question, are listed in Table 7.

It might be said that the latent construct *Equipping* explained 59% of the latent construct in the family. It explained 86% of the latent construct with friends, 55% of the construct with Christian teachers, and 36% of the construct in the local

Table 7

Correlations for Both Corporate Discipling and Personal Discipleship Processes in the Model

Relationships			Correlation co-efficient	r^2
Equipping	⇒	in the family	.77	.59
Equipping	⇒	with friends	.93	.86
Equipping	⇒	with Christian teachers	.74	.55
Equipping	⇒	in the local church	.60	.36
Equipping	⇒	Connecting	.85	.72
Connecting	⇒	Ministering	.54	.29
Connecting	⇒	Understanding	.65	.42

church. Also, *Equipping* within all of those groups explained 72% of the latent construct *Connecting*, *Connecting* explained 29% of *Ministering*, and *Connecting* also explained 42% of *Understanding*.

Stability of Model Across Selected Demographic Characteristics

The third research question was whether or not the relationships in the Growing Disciples in Community model were the same for subgroups of the population identified by gender, age, ethnicity, and at-risk conditions—whether the SEM equation model was the same (fitted) for these subgroups.

Each of the questions making up the at-risk scale had either four or five possible responses. The subgroup AR0 was made up of all respondents who had a score of 4 overall, indicating no involvement with any of these factors. The category AR1 was made up of all respondents who had a score of from 5 to 9 on the four items collectively; AR2 was made up of those with scores of between 10 and 14 on the four items collectively; and AR3 was made up of those with scores of from 15 to 19, indicating high involvement with most or all of these factors. The model fit for each of these groups is listed in Table 8.

The structural model was fitted for each of the subgroups with $n > 500$. The model was not well-fitted for the two subgroups with $n < 100$ —American Indians ($n = 74$) and those who scored the highest on the at-risk scale ($n = 79$).

Table 8

Valuegenesis² Respondents Used for Growing Disciples in Community Model by Gender, Grade, Ethnicity, and At-risk Scale

Variable	<i>N</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	CFI	ECVI	BCC	RMSEA
Gender								
Males	3801	5464.4	785	.000	.917	1.522	5788.035	.040
Females	4483	59,481.1	785	.000	.920	1.399	6271.192	.038
Ethnicity								
Am Indian*	74	1299.7	785	.000	.704	22.187	2078.321	.095
Asian/Pacific	834	1846.4	785	.000	.910	2.601	2183.824	.040
Black/African American	716	1784.8	785	.000	.894	2.944	2125.301	.042
Latino	829	1946.6	785	.000	.900	2.737	2284.081	.042
White	4481	6412.2	785	.000	.918	1.503	6735.296	.040
Mixed race	1350	2500.1	785	.000	.917	2.090	2830.608	.040
Grade level								
Grades 6,7,8	3100	4226.3	785	.000	.914	1.467	4550.808	.038
Grades 9,10	2626	3747.1	785	.000	.924	1.549	4072.401	.038
Grades 11,12	2558	3990.0	785	.000	.922	1.686	4315.744	.040
At-Risk**								
AR0	4520	6398.0	785	.000	.912	1.487	6718.027	.040
AR1	3168	4647.0	785	.000	.908	1.568	4971.379	.044
AR2	517	1577.2	785	.000	.908	3.677	1926.270	.044
AR3*	79	1242.6	785	.000	.737	20.033	1955.750	.086

Note. CFI: comparative fit index; ECVI: expected cross-validation index; BCC: Browne-Cudeck criterion; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

*non-fitting models.

**scale explanations on page 65.

Summary

This chapter describes the results of the structural equation modeling for the Growing Disciples in Community model of discipleship, using data from the Valuegenesis² database of responses from adolescents in Grades 6 through 12 attending Seventh-day Adventist church schools in North America. The Growing Disciples in Community model was well-fitted with the data as a whole and also with every subgroup with $n > 500$.

In this model, the latent exogenous variable Equipping is a significant predictor of the latent variables family, friends, Christian teachers, and local church. The latent variable Equipping is also a significant predictor of the latent endogenous variable Connecting with God and others, which is then a significant predictor of latent endogenous variables Understanding and Ministering.

The following chapter, chapter 5, contains a summary of the study followed by conclusions, implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATION

Introduction

Three themes appear to run through the Christian literature: (a) the cultural ethos in the developed world is post-Judeo-Christian, (b) the majority of those who claim Christianity as their religion, if they do attend church at all, do so more as consumers of religious goods and services than as disciples of Christ, and (c) a rising number of young people are choosing to disconnect from the church as soon as they are able. The subjects of discipleship, discipling, and spiritual formation may provide some insights into how to reverse these trends. Thus, a Growing Disciples in Community model was conceptualized. In this model, I hypothesized that an increase in adolescents' reporting of the equipping/discipling behavior in the family, with friends, with Christian teachers, and in the local church congregation would lead to increased self-reported scores by the adolescents in the personal processes involved in discipleship—connecting with God and others, understanding, and ministering.

While there are many models of discipleship and discipling proposed in the literature, there is very little empirical research on this subject. This study set out to propose and test a discipleship and discipling paradigm with adolescents who are both developmentally and spiritually younger believers and who have a very

recognizable need to have other maturing disciples come alongside them in their spiritual journey.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the validity of the Growing Disciples in Community model on a population of adolescents attending Seventh-day Adventist junior high and high schools in North America.

Literature Review

The Growing Disciples in Community model presents a person's discipleship as their being involved in processes of connecting with God and with others, coming to a deepening understanding of God through His word, and developing a deepening connection with others through ministering and service. The model also presents discipling—called equipping—as an implicit part of the ministering aspect of discipleship and thus incumbent upon every disciple as they intentionally walk “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden, 2003, p. 129). The bi-directional, non-hierarchal aspect of discipleship and discipling is made clear in the apostles' communication to the early church regarding how they were to relate to “one another” (see Appendix B).

Currently, discipleship literature and models are focusing strongly on what Hull (2006) calls “environmental discipleship.” It is also called “psychological discipleship” or “relational discipleship” by others. Crabb (1999), Wilhoit (2008), and Gorman (2002) write about community or sometimes family, J. D. Jones (2006)

and Nelson (2008) speak of congregation, encompassing “the ways people get along” (Hull, 2006, p. 20). All models of discipleship can ultimately be traced to processes of how humanity connects with and relates to God and how people connect with and relate to the rest of humanity. Further insights about discipleship that have been selectively borrowed from the therapeutic world come from the work of Cloud and Townsend (2001), Crabb (1997), Holmes (2006), and Holmes and Williams (2007a, 2007b).

As Nuesch-Olver (2005) discovered in qualitative research on college freshmen at a Christian university, “to a person, they used language that clearly illustrated their conviction that relationships were of higher importance in the shaping of their faith than programming” (p. 101). The research revealed that all the students who had steady habits of prayer and Scripture reading described having had a relationship with a mentor who modeled a love relationship with Christ. As Aoki et al. (2000) pointed out, in becoming involved in discipling a young person, “an appropriate role for the mentor in this situation is to come alongside the adolescent, modeling Christian virtues and beliefs, without pushing the adolescent to champion the cause of the church” (p. 382).

The methodology for how Christians should disciple one another by walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden, 2003, p. 129) was first outlined in the biblical book of Deuteronomy. The Israelite tribes or families to whom the Shema (Deut 6:4-9) was first addressed were a large extended network of believers living in a pagan culture who were being told to see to it that God’s law was written

on their own hearts and then to intentionally walk alongside their children (or the less mature among them) as they all grew into spiritual maturity.

Looking at the post-Judeo-Christian culture in which we live in the 21st century, it is not the small mobile and nuclear family of today that is most reminiscent of the Hebrew family Moses was addressing in Deuteronomy; instead, the church as a family is much more similar to Moses' audience than are the social units we usually call "family" today.

Hellerman (2009), in his book *When the Church Was Family*, draws on the sociology of the Mediterranean family to make this concept clear. According to the methodology of discipling laid out in the Shema, therefore, the church should be involved in discipling one another in everyday life, such as "when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut 6:9, NASB). This is a far different picture from that of Christians as consumers of religious goods and services.

Peterson's (1993) model of discipleship and discipling, which builds on Paul's counsel to the church in Thessalonica, explains aspects of the dynamic of church-family discipling. He explains the family discipling approach that is to be taken with various developmental levels of disciples. In 1 Thess 2:7-10 the disciple is described as a little child, and the discipler is to be "gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children" (NASB). In 1 Thess 2:11 Paul describes the "adolescent" stage disciple. The discipleship-prompting that this group needs is that of a father "exhorting and encouraging and imploring" (1 Thess

2:11, NASB). As the disciples grow and mature, they become brothers and sisters (see 1 Thess 1:6-10 and 2:13-16), peers, standing “shoulder to shoulder.”

The goal, of course, is maturity in Christ; it happens only over time, and it relates to spiritual development, which may or may not coincide with physical development. Different stages of spiritual growth require different parenting roles to be taken by the discipler. Everyone is both disciplined and discipler—brothers and sisters growing together toward fullness in Christ. The letter to the Ephesians sums it up with these words:

As a result we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves carried about by every wind of doctrine . . . but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Eph 4:14-16, NASB)

As the report from the Commission on Children at Risk (2003) made plain after investigating “empirically the social, moral, and spiritual foundations of child well-being,” a crisis among children and young people in the culture in general is being caused by “a lack of connectedness . . . close connections to other people, and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning” (p. 5). In their report they concluded that “what can help most to solve the crisis are *authoritative communities*” (p. 6). Their short definition of this term was “groups that live out the types of connectedness that our children increasingly lack. They are groups of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life” (p. 6).

Oman and Thoresen (2003) suggest a “powerful intervention strategy would be to give people the tools to establish effective relationships with individually

appropriate spiritual models whose lives facilitate the observational learning of important spiritual skills” (p. 158). Although they were speaking about spirituality in a much broader sense than understood by evangelical Christians, what more important place for these strategies to be in place than the local Christian congregation? Collinson (2005) reflects that “the stimulation of learning from close, personal relationships between individuals, partners, small groups and a larger community offers opportunities for learning which appeal to the deep social, emotional and psychological needs of humanity” (p. 103).

Boyatzis and Janicki (2003), in the *Review of Religious Research*, point out that it “takes a village” to socialize a child. The family, for better or for worse, is the first village. However, as Goodliff states, “Family is too fragile an institution to bear the burden of responsibility placed upon it” (as cited in Collinson, 2005, p. 194). The second village must be the other Christians in a child’s life—friends, teachers, and local church.

A caution for relying on “observational learning of important spiritual skills” (Oman & Thoreson, 2003, p. 158), however, is based on the same learning theory that makes it a powerful strategy—hidden curriculum. Collinson (2005) comments that “desirable attitudes and values are influenced more by the hidden curriculum than by intentional teaching (p. 189). Unfortunately, the converse is also true—undesireable attitudes and values are also influenced more by hidden curriculum than by intentional teaching. Religious socialization as a method of “prompting discipleship” (Samra, 2003) breaks down when the disciplers themselves are not growing in the strength of their connecting with God and others, understanding of

God through His Word, and in involvement with ministering to others by participating in God's mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration.

Once again, the Shema (Deut 6:4-9) gives the methodology: "And these words, which I am commanding you today, *shall be on your heart*; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut 6:6, 7, NASB, emphasis mine).

Paul gives the goal: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, . . . but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ" (Eph 4:14, 15, NASB).

Methodology

This was a secondary data analysis of the Valuegenesis² study conducted in the year 2000 among junior high and high school students attending Seventh-day Adventist schools in North America. The Valuegenesis² data included sufficient items measuring self-reported beliefs and attitudes that could be interpreted as indicators of discipleship and the students' perception of attitudes and actions inherent in their relationships with family, friends, Christian teachers, and their local church congregations. A model of discipleship was proposed and tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) with data from 8,284 adolescents who participated in the Valuegenesis² study.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) allows a researcher to take the theory of a paradigm such as the Growing Disciples in Community model, and, given an

appropriate database, test its validity. The first step was to do confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on newly formed scales using Amos 7 software. The CFA revealed that the correlation between the latent variables Discipleship and Connecting in the initial hypothesized model (see Figure 2) was so high as to suggest that these two factors were not distinct (i.e. had poor discriminant validity).

A review of the theory confirmed that discipleship is actually a matter of connecting with God and with others—resulting in an increased understanding of our relationship with God as revealed in His Word and an increased commitment to ministering to others. During confirmatory factor analysis, the model was adjusted, deleting the latent variable Discipleship and representing Connecting with God and others as a latent variable explaining the latent variables Understanding and Ministering (see Figure 3).

Findings

Structural Equation Modeling procedures using Amos 7 indicated that the covariance matrix for the conceptual model fit the covariance matrix for the structural model, thus indicating empirical support for the Growing Disciples in Community model (see Figure 4).

The significant relationships among the variables in the model indicated that the Equipping (exogenous, latent variable) or discipling attitudes and behaviors of Christians in the lives of adolescents (family, friends, Christian teachers, and local church members) explained 72% of the Connecting (endogenous, latent) variable, and the Connecting variable then explained 42% and 29% of the Understanding and Ministering variables, respectively.

The validity of the structural model was also stable and consistent across various demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, grade level, and even at-risk behavior, provided the sample size was greater than 100.

Discussion

The discipleship model examined and validated in this study provides empirical support for theory about the importance of “environmental discipleship” (Hull, 2006, p. 20). In fact, in the confirmatory factor analysis on the Growing Disciples in Community scales, the data showed that the construct Discipleship was the same as the construct Connecting with God and others as operationalized in this model. The Equipping or discipling attitudes and behaviors experienced by adolescents when they are with their family, with their friends, with Christian teachers, and with their local church congregation explained 72% of their own attitude of Connecting with God and others. And Connecting explained 29% of their involvement with Ministering to others and 42% of their Understanding—learning the truth of God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ the Word (see Table 6).

So what would be different if the Christian church put into practice a church family equipping model of discipleship and discipling according to Deut 6:4-9, 1 Thess 1 and 2, and Eph 4:14-16? And, how, if at all, might it prompt discipleship in young people?

What better place for “authoritative community” to exist than the local Christian church? Not only do Christian young people increasingly need this type of community beyond their nuclear family, but these communities could be the very

agency that could fill this need for the children and young people of our modern culture who are not already part of church “family” and who have no other authoritative community of any kind.

The ideas of “authoritative communities” (Commission on Children at Risk, 2003) and “observational spiritual modeling” (Oman & Thoresen, 2003) are practical applications that Christian families, Christian teachers, and the local church congregation could all make in their attempts to improve their equipping/discipling of adolescents. The bedrock of this equipping, however, needs to be the local church congregation.

The family is, of course, the “first village” that socializes children. However, parents themselves need to be disciplined and equipped somewhere so that they learn the skills of “observational spiritual modeling.” And, although families are also the best “authoritative communities,” the secular culture and the demise of the extended family (even the nuclear family) make the potential of having many family-based “authoritative communities” slim at best.

Christian friends, who were the group registering the strongest correlation with the equipping/discipling of other adolescents also need an “authoritative community” mentoring them so that the strong correlation (.90) between their equipping behaviors and their friends’ discipleship is a positive one.

Christian schools are primarily a part of, or strongly affiliated with, local congregations. If the local congregations do not have a mind-set of being “authoritative communities” that supply “observational spiritual modeling,” the work of the teachers at the Christian schools is much less effective. And, although

the research used in this study was conducted with adolescents attending Christian schools, the reality is that the majority of Christian adolescents do not attend Christian schools. Besides the potentially shaky strength of the Christian parent/family, adolescents need another strong “authoritative community” to supply “observational spiritual modeling” and mentoring.

At present there seem to be few, if any, attempts within local churches to intentionally disciple/equip adolescents within a relational and not programmatic structure. What might local church congregations do to intentionally come alongside adolescent disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge them in love to grow toward maturity in Christ?

It appears that it is time that the local Christian church congregation, with or without the guidance of an active youth or family ministry, accepts the role each member plays as part of “authoritative community” and therefore a vital part of “what can help most to solve the crisis” (Commission on Children at Risk, 2003, p. 6), as Christians view it, of the low estate of discipleship and the corollary rejection of the church by its young people.

In response to the first Valuegenesis study of Seventh-day Adventist adolescents in 1990, youth ministry expert Steve Case (1993) wrote, “Without question the weakest link is the local congregation. Of the 12 effectiveness factors [to adolescent faith development] in this arena, the 2 most important are a warm, caring environment and a thinking environment” (p. 14). Case decried the lack of youth pastors in the local churches and youth directors in other levels of administration. He equates the lack of these youth professionals as “nobody being

home” when he states, “We can rant and rave about the terrible data and the obvious decline in youth ministry, but it’s somewhat like ordering an absent tenant to pay his rent. What good is it to serve notice when nobody’s home?” (p. 14).

However, the Growing Disciples in Community model points out that there *is* somebody home. If there is a church, there must be a church member, and if there is a church member, then someone is home. Both research and theory indicate that intentionally supporting healthy, intergenerational relationships for spiritual growth and modeling within the family of God can only improve the state of discipleship and youth retention.

Implications

For Practice

According to the Growing Disciples in Community model, the discipleship of young people is built on connecting. Connecting involves both a sense of God’s presence in their lives and a deepening desire to strengthen that relationship, as well as a love for other people and a desire to share their deepening relationship with God with those people. Connecting flows to a deepening understanding of God’s relationship with humanity as expressed in His Word, and an increased involvement in ministering to others.

Ministry to and with young people, then, must facilitate those deepening connections. After making a decision to become followers of Jesus, young people need both opportunities for and models of these aspects of connecting vertically and horizontally—from within their families, while with their friends, while with the teachers at their Christian schools, and from every member within their local

church. When one of those sources of discipling/equipping fail or falter, then the others are needed all the more.

The church, then, cannot afford to view youth ministry, family ministry, community outreach, support of missions, spiritual growth, and its other ministries and endeavors as isolated initiatives. Everything that is done in the name of Christianity is either facilitating or hindering the growing connections of its young people with God and with others. And, the more closely the young people are involved in all aspects of the life of the church, the more opportunities for and models of connecting vertically and horizontally they are having. It truly does take a village to disciple young people.

According to the Growing Disciples in Community model, the discipleship of young people can be strengthened by opportunities for the study of God through His Word and outreach opportunities to share their growing love of God with others through the youth ministry, but also by the following:

1. Strengthening the faith walk of parents and teaching them how to share that faith with their children
2. Facilitating and encouraging family service projects
3. Teaching the young people how to function positively within their relationships with one another
4. Strengthening the spiritual growth of Christian school teachers so that every teacher's faith walk impacts their students and not just the Bible teacher's
5. Strengthening the discipleship walk of adults at church so that they are

able to create a warm, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere for everyone, including young people

6. Creating an atmosphere of uncritical exchange of ideas and an openness to honest questions.

Individual adults could have a significant impact on the discipleship of young people in the church family without waiting for church-wide programs and initiatives by such simple behaviors as these:

1. Learning the names of the children and young people in the congregation and greeting them with respect and attention each week

2. Attending to their own spiritual growth so that they are prepared to be active spiritual mentors and disciplers, or at the very least not to be negative hidden curriculum about what it means to be a joyous and victorious disciple of Christ

3. Retired church members offering after-school tutoring and care for families with working parents

4. Single adults offering to be big brothers and big sisters to adolescents whose parent(s) do not have much quality time to give them

5. Keeping individual young people in daily prayer, even offering to be prayer partners with them

6. Forming intergenerational small groups in which children and young people can experience spiritual growth not only with their parents, but also with other adults committed both to God and to them

7. Mentoring adolescents to function in many service capacities within the church

8. Involving them in intergenerational community and mission outreach projects.

In the usual age-differentiated church culture, it will take some intentional planning in order to facilitate intergenerational relationships on a church-wide basis, but the benefit for the entire church would be exponential.

Although I do not share Case's (1993) emphasis on youth pastors and youth directors for the primary discipling of young people, I do concur with his summative appeal:

[Research] won't make change happen. It is only an evaluation tool that we will either respond to or ignore. Those who take initiative for a long-term planned change, whether they be a family, local congregation, school, or conference, will be the ones who truly hear today and change the status quo. Those who listen but don't act will be the foolish ones who hear the warning today but their young people, and their entire church, will be gone tomorrow (Matt 7:24-27). (p. 14)

For Future Research

Of course, both theory and statistics are human creations and thus subject to error. One factor that potentially limits the validity or generalizability of the Growing Disciples in Community structural model is the fact that the observed variables used to explain the latent variables were items created for the Valuegenesis² study, which was looking at adolescents and their religiosity and spirituality from a different perspective than the one used in the Growing Disciples in Community model.

Empirical data need to be collected using survey instruments created specifically for studying the effect of intergenerational relationships on the discipleship and spiritual well-being of adolescents. Longitudinal qualitative studies

would also be an excellent way to study the effects of discipling relationships in the home, in the Christian school, and in the local church and their future impact on the connecting, understanding, and ministering behaviors of young adults into their 20s and 30s.

It would also be helpful to conduct research using a similar conceptual model with adults, particularly with new believers as they come into the church family at an early stage of spiritual development.

The Growing Disciples in Community measurement model (see Appendix C) using Valuegenesis² data also provides opportunities for further study of interest, particularly in the area of the observed variables about the local church. During this study it was noted that an inverse relationship was indicated between adolescents' responses about whether or not they felt that adults and youth in their church really cared about them and their other, more objective responses about the overall friendliness and climate of the congregation. This indicates that another latent variable, not a part of the Growing Disciples in Community model, might possibly be at work.

Summary

Chapter 5 began with the themes and presuppositions that undergird the creation of a Christian discipleship/discipling model. The purpose of the study was to test that model with empirical data from adolescents. The conceptual model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). The structural model indicated that there was a significant relationship between the discipling behaviors and attitudes of Christian families, Christian

friends, Christian teachers, and the local church and the self-reported discipleship processes of adolescents. The implication is that local church congregations could effectively mentor and disciple the adolescents in their congregations by developing close relationships with them and providing the environment they need to thrive as growing Christians. Suggestions are given for specific actions local churches could take to foster these relationships. Suggestions for further research are also made.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

VALUEGENESIS² ITEMS USED IN GROWING DISCIPLES IN COMMUNITY SCALES

Personal Discipleship Process—**Connecting**: Relating intimately with God and developing positive relationships with others (John 13:35; Matt 22:37-38).

1	I help others with their religious questions and struggles
5	I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people.
6	I feel my life is filled with meaning and purpose
11	I have a real sense that God is guiding me
13	Which of the following best describes your commitment to Jesus Christ?
25	How important is it to you to have friends who you can talk to about spiritual things?
37	How often, if ever, do you read the Bible on your own?
104	How important is it to you to be active in the Adventist church?
105	How important is it to you to show love to other people?
176	How much do you agree or disagree that you get along with your parents?
197	How comfortable are you in talking with others about your faith and what God means to you?
234	How much has personal devotions helped you develop your religious faith?
263	How often in the last few years did you talk to a teacher at school about God or faith?
265	How often in the last few years did you talk to your mother about faith?
266	How often in the last few years did you talk to your father about faith?
267	How often in the last few years did you talk to a pastor about faith?
272	How interested are you in programs that would help you learn more about gaining a deeper relationship with God?
274	How interested are you in programs that would help you learn more about how to talk with your parents?
275	How interested are you in programs that would help you learn more

	about how to talk to a friend about faith?
315	It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer
316	I have often had a strong sense of God's presence
328	Prayers I say when I'm alone are as important to me as those I say in church

Personal Discipleship Process—***Understanding***: Learning the truth of God's relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word (John 8:31; Matt 4:4).

40	I know that God loves me no matter what I do
41	There is nothing I can do to earn salvation
45	I am loved by God even when I sin
53	Salvation is God's free gift to us that we don't deserve and cannot earn
55	My good works are a response to God's gift of grace
69	The body is the temple of God, and we are responsible in every area of life for its care
74	God, the Holy Spirit, teaches us how much we need Jesus in our lives, draws us to Jesus, and makes us like Him.
75	The first man and woman, created as free beings in the image of God, chose to rebel against God. We have inherited their fallen nature along with all its consequences
76	There is a great controversy taking place between God and Satan. It began in heaven with the rebellion of Lucifer and will continue until the end of time
77	The church is God's family on earth, a community of faith in which many members, all equal in Christ, join for worship, instruction and service
84	After the millennium, God will recreate the earth as a perfect, eternal home of the redeemed. Sin will never exist again.

Personal Discipleship Process—**Ministering**: Participating in God’s mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration (Matt 28:18; Matt 25:40).

3	I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world
4	I give significant portions of time and money to help other people
7	I show that I care a great deal about reducing poverty in my country and throughout the world
18	How often during the last year did you try directly to encourage someone to believe in Jesus Christ
19	How often during the last year have you told others about the work of God in your life?
20	How often during the last year did you try directly to encourage someone to join the Adventist church?
21	How often during the last year did you help people who are poor, hungry, sick, or unable to care for themselves (don’t count family members)
22	How many volunteer hours do you spend during the average month helping friends or neighbors with problems they have
23	How many volunteer hours do you spend during the average month promoting social equality (racial equality, women’s rights, economic reform) or world peace
24	How many volunteer hours do you spend during the average month making your own town or city a better place to live (be doing volunteer work in a school, being on a city committee or task force)
102	How important is it to you to help people who are poor or hungry?
106	How important is it to you to promote social equality?
244	How much have short-term mission projects helped you develop your religious faith?
256	How much have evangelistic outreach (giving Bible studies, distributing literature, etc.)?

Corporate Discipling Process—***Equipping***: Intentionally walking “alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Greg Ogden, 2003) (Eph 4:15-16; Deut 6:4-9).

In the family

247	How much has family worship helped you develop your religious faith?
248	How much has your mother’s faith helped you develop your religious faith?
249	How much has your father’s faith helped you develop your religious faith?
250	How much has your grandparent’s faith helped you develop your religious faith?
253	How much did the family I grew up in help you develop your religious faith?
260	In the last few years, how often did you do or participate in family projects to help other people

With friends

27	How important is it to you to have friends who encourage you to meet good goals?
28	How important is it to you to have friends who help keep you out of trouble?
30	How important is it to you to have friends who are a good influence on you?
34	How important is it to you to have friends who attend religious services regularly?
251	How much has your friend’s faith helped you develop your religious faith?
342	My friends attend church almost every week
344	My friends belong to church-sponsored groups for teenagers
345	My friends are very religious-minded

With Christian teachers

208	Teachers are interested in students
210	Teachers listen to what their students say
243	How much has the Bible teacher helped you develop your religious faith?
252	How much has the teacher's faith helped you develop your religious faith?
335	How willing are your teachers at your school to talk about sensitive issues (sex, drugs, etc.)?

In the local church congregation

87	My local church feels warm
88	I learn a lot there
89	My church accepts people who are different
91	My church is friendly
93	My church encourages me to ask questions
94	Strangers feel welcome at my church
95	My church expects people to learn and think
97	My church provides fellowship
261	In the last few years, how often did you experience the feeling that adults in your local church care about you?
262	In the last few years, how often did you experience the feeling that youth in your local church care about you?
215	At my church, my teachers or adult leaders know me well
216	At my church, my teachers or adult leaders are warm and friendly
218	At my church, my teachers or adult leaders care about me
258	How much has the church pastor helped you develop your religious faith?

APPENDIX B

EXHORTATIONS TO “ONE-ANOTHER”

Exhortations to “One-Another”
(All references from the New International Version)

Matthew 7:2

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Matthew 7:12

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Mark 9:50

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

Luke 6:31

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

John 5:44

How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 15:12

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:17

This is my command: Love each other.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Romans 14:13

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

Romans 15:7

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:14

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Romans 16:16

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1 Corinthians 11:33

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

1 Corinthians 12:25

so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

1 Corinthians 16:20

All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Cor. 8:14, 15

At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, [15] as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

2 Corinthians 13:12

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Galatians 5:13

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Galatians 5:15

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:19

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Philippians 2:4

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 4:2

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

Colossians 3:9

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

Titus 3:3

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10:24, 25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 13:1

Keep on loving each other as brothers.

James 4:11

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

James 5:9

Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Peter 1:22

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

1 Peter 4:8, 9

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 5:5

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

1 Peter 5:14

Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 3:11

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1 John 3:23

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11-12

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. [12] No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

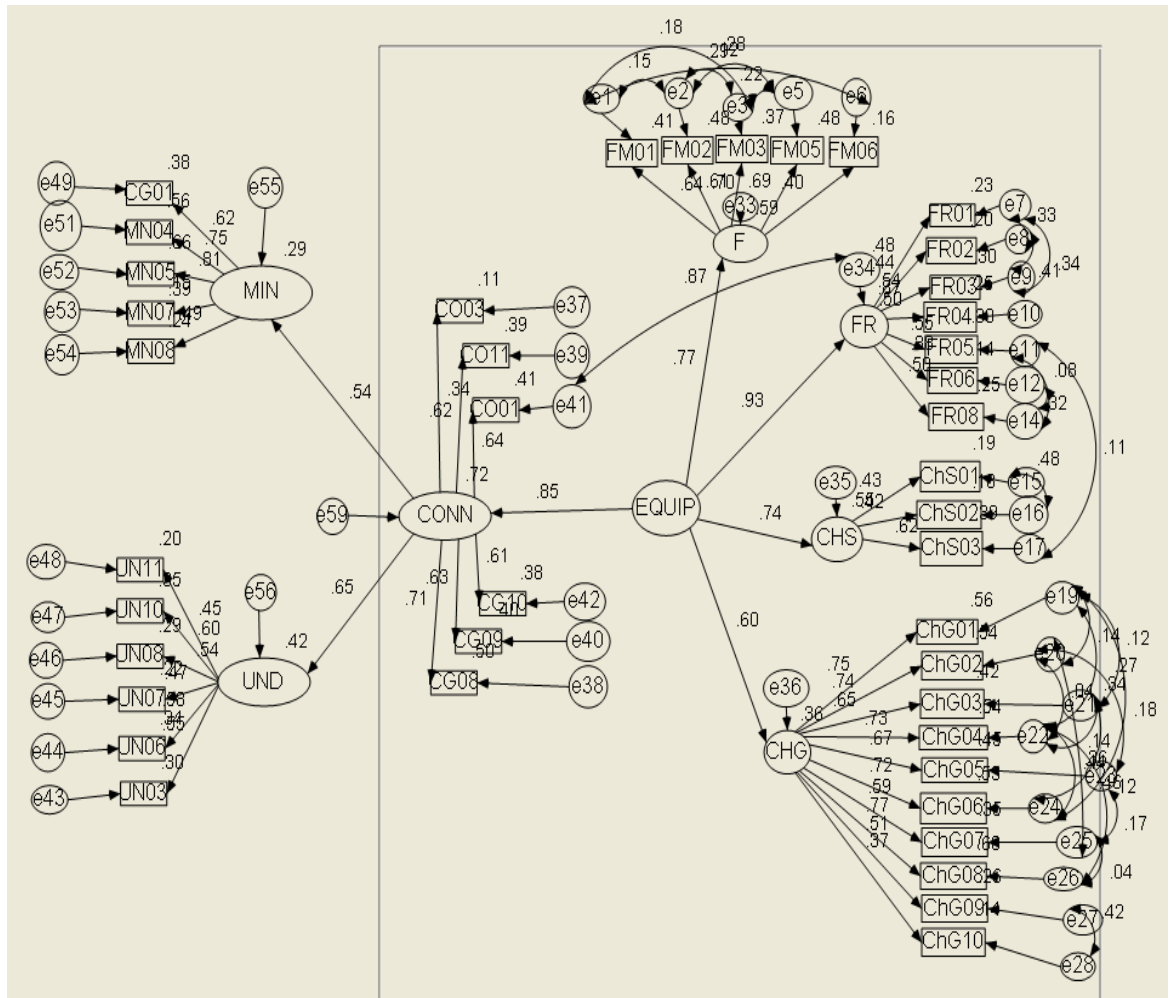
2 John 1:5

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.

APPENDIX C

GROWING DISCIPLES IN COMMUNITY MEASUREMENT MODEL

Growing Disciples in Community Measurement Model



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